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# **A WHITE AUSTRALIA.**

THE KANAKA LABOR QUESTION.

Sugar Growing in Queensland.

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The Part Played by the Black Man.

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A "HERALD" INVESTIGATION.

By its SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.

MELBOURNE.

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*The matter contained in this volume appeared in a series of articles in the Melbourne "Herald," May-September, 1901. It is collected and reprinted by the Proprietors for the further information and convenience of citizens of Australia now engaged in the consideration of a highly important and perplexing question of public policy.*

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# OUR SUGAR STATE.

THE VARI-COLORED NORTH.

MARVELLOUS QUEENSLAND.

TROPICAL AND SUB-TROPICAL.

A GREAT INDUSTRY: HOW IT IS CARRIED ON.

KANAKA LABOR QUESTION.

THE "WHITE AUSTRALIA" POLICY.

A "HERALD" INVESTIGATION.

## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

There was a period when it seemed unlikely that Queensland would be one of the original partners in the Commonwealth of Australia. So indisposed was she made to appear by the Government and Parliament in charge of her political fortunes that she was not represented at the now historic Convention. Her statesmen stood apart while the representatives of the rest of the Continent and of the Island of Tasmania debated terms of union, and finally drafted a constitution. All deplored the aloofness of Queensland, yet all felt that the great northern colony could not be, and should not be either bullied or cajoled into union. We in the south pointed out what she would lose by her persistence in the policy of isolation. We did what we could to impress the fact that, apart from other considerations — including those sometimes superciliously referred to as sentimental—the best interests of Queensland required that she should be brought within the tariff ring-fence which the Commonwealth Parliament would certainly erect. It was not

merely venturing an opinion, but, rather, stating a manifest fact, to affirm that the staple products of the north, for which the readiest and best market is found in the south, would, if she remained apart, have to carry disabilities incidental to any tariff which the Commonwealth Parliament might frame, and that this was not good for the Queensland stock-raiser, neither was it good for the Queensland sugar planter. Yet for the time the men who managed affairs in the north were obdurate. They closed their eyes, and refused to see; they steeled their hearts, and refused to feel. It was not well with the spirit of federation in the north.

### A SELF-CONTAINED STATE.

What was the reason of this diffidence, this obstinacy? It would be mere folly to assume, or to even suggest, that either arose from wholly unreasoning perversity. No; the view that obtained was based upon the knowledge that Queensland stands in a position of particular advantage amongst the divisions of Australia. There is no doubt about that. Remember first her vast area—668,224 square miles. Into this space no fewer than seven States the size of Victoria might be put. The United King-



dom would fit comfortably into one-fifth of it, Germany or France could be accommodated in a third, and New South Wales in a half of that area. Moreover, Queensland's geographical position is such that the whole of her immense territory promises something practicable, and that is by no means assured in respect to the even more extensive States of South Australia (including the Northern Territory) and Western Australia. Coterminous with New South Wales on the south, Queensland stretches northward for a distance of 400 miles in the temperate zone. Then she projects herself north of the Tropic of Capricorn a distance of over 900 miles towards the Equator before Cape Yorke is reached and she completes her eastern coast line of about 1300 miles. So large is the State that the north has long sought separation from the South. It is notable that the proposed dividing line is considerably within the tropics. It runs from Cape Palmerston, 140 miles north of Capricorn, and excludes Rockhampton and Keppel Bay. The area of the suggested new colony is given at 249,000 square miles. Not only is the huge State tropical and sub-tropical, but her differences altitudinarian are so marked that in both divisions she presents wonderful varieties of soil and climate. Anything that the kindly earth brings forth for the good of the human family can be grown in some part of Queensland. Wheat, wool, and meat in the south, and on the northern uplands: sugar, tea, cotton, coffee and tropical fruits of all kinds on the productive strip of coast line, ten to forty miles wide, extending, perhaps, a thousand miles, between Brisbane and Cooktown. And she is a land richly endowed with treasures in gold and coal, and, in fact, pretty well all that man needs. Regular supplies of water must be excepted, but, having regard to possibilities, only for the present. Her artesian supplies are immense, and are only now being drawn upon.

#### POSITION OF THE OBJECTORS.

Those who disliked the idea of Queensland parting with the degree of absolute self-government necessarily surrendered on entering into political partnership with her southern neighbors, felt very strongly that she is a self-contained State. One also, they considered, with special interests, which she could only

trust her own people to deal with in the light of their close knowledge and experience. "Therefore," it was contended, "we think it best to stand out. Huge sums of money are embarked in our special industries, and about the conditions under which they may best be fostered and maintained we differ amongst ourselves a good deal, yet manage on the whole to rub along fairly well. We cannot afford experiments. We are quite friendly, and wish our neighbors 'God speed.' Some day we may join them, but the time is not yet." This was the attitude of the anti-federalists, and represents the official attitude of Queensland when the rest of Australia said "Yes" to the Commonwealth Bill of 1898.

#### QUEENSLAND COMES IN.

Although the Northern Colony was not represented at the drafting, her interests were not ignored in the scheme of Union. Provision was made for her entry into the federation as an original State, if she wished to come in at any time before the draft Bill became an Act of the Imperial Parliament. But events had moved in Queensland. By the time we were ready to meet the difficulty caused by the position of New South Wales on the statutory majority question, the late Sir James (then Mr) Dickson had become Premier of the North. The fact that Queensland had not taken part in the Convention was not regarded as any reason why he should be excluded from the famous Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in 1899. He accepted an invitation, took part in the deliberations, and secured the inclusion of a special provision, incidental to the election of Queensland senators, in the Bill as amended by the Premiers. Then he went home, managed his Parliament, and gave the people of the north a chance to speak for themselves. With what happy result we know. Queensland decided, by a considerable majority, to accept the project of Union, and Queensland is to-day a valued partner as an original State of the Commonwealth. All honor to the memory of that unpretentious man who saw the "psychological moment," and knew how to use it. Owing to the wisdom of Sir James Dickson the continent of Australia is politically united to-day, and future generations will bless his name.



## BASIS OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.

If the present generation of Queenslanders are not all eager to set the example to those future generations, it is because a good many of them are just now greatly disturbed at the thought of some federal consequences. One of the northern State's great industries is the production of cane sugar. As "The Herald" has oftentimes declared, Queensland is capable of growing sugar for the whole of Australia. But the Queensland sugar industry has been established, and is now being carried on, by labor brought from the Polynesian islands. In the State itself for many years the leading controversial question in politics is that furnished by the Kanaka. In 1885 the anti-Kanaka party prevailed, and the law forbade any fresh introductions of Polynesian labor after 1890, the planters being given five years within which to make other provision. In 1892 the pro-Kanaka party prevailed, and several of the more distinguished of the antis, including Sir Samuel Griffith, recanted. The prohibition was repealed, and the Kanaka is going as strong as ever on the northern plantations. Much of the hesitancy of the northern people directly or indirectly dependent upon the sugar industry to enter federation arose from the dread that Kanaka labor would be interfered with. For it is part of the duty of the Commonwealth to regulate alien colored labor. Article XXVI. of clause 51 gives the Parliament power to deal with "the people of any race, other than the aboriginal in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws." And the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth has intimated that the permissive power given in that article will soon and certainly be employed.

## ATTITUDE OF THE PLANTERS.

The producers of sugar are shrewd men. They saw that it would be an advantage to stand inside the tariff ring, to have a free market for their produce as wide as the Commonwealth, but they dreaded interference with their black labor. Yet there was no certainty if they stood out that their own Parliament would long permit the use of that labor to them, and on the whole they voted for federation. "We felt it would be better," a planter remarked to me, "to be put down by the whole of Aus-

tralia rather than by a part of it. We decided to trust you people in the south to do a fair thing, to treat us equitably, to apply whatever policy you might determine upon in a way that would not be utterly regardless of our interests." Under these circumstances it may easily be understood with what anxiety the people of the north awaited the declaration of the policy of the Barton Government. Easy, too, is it to realise with what mixed emotions, after the declaration had been made at Maitland, they found that Mr Barton had spoken as follows:—

## THE MAITLAND DECLARATION.

In the north of Queensland there has grown up the industry of sugar raising, which becomes under Federation one of the national possessions of Australia. Now, with regard to this sugar industry, we may suppose that a policy on purely freetrade lines—a policy which is threatened, but which does not seem very practicable, is carried out. I will take the suggestion of one very strong freetrader in my own State, a man whom I honor and respect very much—Mr Pulsford. The suggestion is that there should be raised on a very few articles a tariff of L6,000,000, or L6,500,000, a sum that was at that time considered sufficient. Among the suggestions was one that imported sugar should be taxed to the extent of L7 a ton, and that a corresponding amount of excise duty should be placed upon the article. If we agreed to that, the price of sugar would certainly be increased by L7 a ton, according to every theory of the political economist. What would be the result? If the sugar industry is a national possession, then the nation would be robbing itself of its own possession. More than that, if you tax by way of excise duties the result must be in the end that all the revenue you get is obtained from imports, and there will be no man working upon the industry in Australia. Now, I take it, that is not the kind of guardianship you wish the Government to exercise over your industries. We will put it another way. We have decided upon a policy of preventing any such importation of Kanaka labor as will lead to an increase in the number now working in Queensland. Some of them have to go away under agreements, and their places may be filled by others, but what we have stated is that we will take steps to prevent an increase in the aggregate number. More than that we have stated that we intend to legislate so as to approach and gradually secure the total abolition of the traffic, spread over a term of years. There would be no necessity for a white Australia policy if you had an equal import and equal excise duty on sugar. You could not then grow sugar with either white labor or black. We believe the industry can ultimately be worked by white labor, and that in the meantime it is entitled to consideration.



We believe that by the use of smaller farms and closer cultivation, we shall approach a condition of affairs under which white labor can work the plantations. Recent statistics have given us valuable information in connection with this matter. They show that during the past ten years the output of Australian sugar has doubled, while the number of Kanakas at work has remained nearly the same. We cannot but think that the Kanaka element is an evil which is not increasing in proportion, but which the advance of science will enable us to do without.

#### NOT A GREAT SURPRISE.

To say that these words came like a bomb into the camp of the sugar planters would be to use a very old and familiar figure, but yet it would be the language of exaggeration. Personally, I do not believe that the sugar planters expected much else. The demand for a "White Australia" they had not been unaccustomed to. It had for years been sounded in their reluctant ears, and they were shrewd enough to know that the demand would be at least as loudly uttered in the south as it was in the north. They hoped, however, to persuade the south to believe, as some of them most honestly and sincerely believe, that the continuance of the Kanaka is a positive necessity, that the sugar industry is absolutely dependent upon him. They hoped, at worst, to get good terms from a generous people in the south, a people less likely to be excited on the Kanaka question than are the northern objectors, who have studied it on the spot, whose lot is cast where the material for the question is. No; I do not think that the Barton declaration came as an astounding surprise to the sugar planters.

#### MR THYNNE IN REPLY.

Some of the cleverest men in Queensland are ranged on the side of the pro-Kanaka party, and Mr Barton's declaration of policy was not allowed to pass without prompt and able criticism. In the first rank of the critics stands the hon. A. J. Thynne, M.L.C., a pamphlet from whose pen quickly followed the Maitland speech. In this the writer repudiates the idea that his State had at any stage been unmindful of her duty to the white people of the continent, and after reviewing a series of Acts, claims that "as regards prevention of a Chinese influx, Queensland has led the way of all Australia," also that "Queensland is today the only State in Australia able to

effectively exclude Japanese artisans and laborers coming by sea." Perhaps the strongest possible statement of the case as against intervention by the Federal Parliament is contained in the following passages of Mr Thynne's pamphlet:—

The attack is not only without justification, but it is most ill-timed. The great sugar industry is to-day suffering from the effect of the same drought which has so sorely smitten our pastoral industry. Shortness of crops has pressed severely on those dependent upon sugar-growing, and this inconsiderate attack will tend to destroy confidence and check expansion. Some 20,000 white mechanics and laborers, it is said, are directly dependent on the industry, and their occupation has been seriously threatened. Queensland's outlook is grave enough as a consequence of immense pastoral losses, without having further difficulties capriciously thrust upon her. Had the Federal Ministry taken any capable public man into their confidence — and there were several of them in Sydney at the time—before the manifesto was framed, they assuredly would not have done Queensland this grave wrong, even for the sake of catching some uninformed Southern votes, for which Mr Reid might make a higher bid. Surely, too, they have not considered the consequences in the broad view of the best interests of Australia and the Empire.

Queensland in her sugar industry has been carrying on a great work. She employs a smaller proportion of colored labor in it than any other cane-growing country in the world. The proportion of such labor is gradually but surely decreasing. She is practically the only sugar-producing State in Australia. If her work is hastily checked, the people of Australia will have to depend for their supplies of a necessary article of food not upon their own people, within their own borders, and whose conduct is open for them to see, but upon foreign countries such as Java and other places, such as Mauritius and Fiji, where sugar is produced almost exclusively by colored labor of the cheapest form. It seems a weak and unreasoning thing to do, to strangle an industry within Australia, which employs more than two-thirds of liberally-paid white labor and less than one-third of fairly-paid colored labor, for the sake of getting our Australian requirements from places where the article is produced by colored labor exclusively, and that of the cheapest and almost servile description. Or else we must get our supplies from bounty-fed beet-growing countries, with which international complications may at any time arise.

To most people in Queensland the Pacific Islander is less obnoxious than the British Indian coolies, who have been coming to Australia in gradually-increasing numbers. They are employed to a considerable extent in New South Wales. They are British subjects, and it will not be found easy to refuse them admittance if they continue to come of their own



accord. We can prevent their engagement in India, but it is not so easy to refuse them admission, when as British subjects they claim the right to visit, and live, and work in Australia. The sudden curtailment of the employment of the Kanaka, restricted as it is to field work, will force the sugar farmers to some extent to fall back on the Indian coolie, who cannot be restricted to field work, and who may in time prove a most undesirable competitor to our artisans and laborers, as well as other classes. Once the British-India laborer learns that he can get high wages in Queensland, he will come here of his own accord, and when this happens the white laborer will have met his greatest antagonist in this and other fields of employment. Is it wise to run this risk? Which of these two classes of colored labor do the people of Australia, and especially of Queensland, dislike most?

### THE VOICE OF QUEENSLAND.

During the General Election campaign the planters were in a poor way. The only obvious alternative to the policy of Mr Barton was that of Mr Reid, and, behold, the "same old George" was, or appeared to be, even more strongly insistent upon a White Australia than Mr Barton. Towards the end of the campaign Mr Reid visited Brisbane, and there seemed to be oppressed with doubts. He had not learned the rights of the question, some new light had come to him—it came strangely to the more experienced Sir Samuel Griffith in 1892—he would inquire personally, and so on. Acrid critics say that Mr Reid was seeking votes. My recent observations in the Far North have not induced the belief that the right hon. gentleman's uncertainty won any. But there is no doubt at all about how the electors of the State who went to the poll—it is a pity more didn't go—spoke on the issue. Queensland had to elect six Senators, and the figures are:—

Anti-Kanaka .. . . .	4
Pro-Kanaka .. . . .	2
<hr/>	
Majority against Kanakas ..	2

The State had also to elect nine members of the House of Representatives. The figures were:—

Anti-Kanaka .. . . .	7
Pro-Kanaka .. . . .	2
<hr/>	
Majority against Kanakas ..	5

Right through the North, where the whites are closest to the Kanakas, and where it may, on general principles, be assumed men know their own interest, the vote was pronouncedly against the

retention of Polynesian labor. Plainly then, if the Commonwealth Parliament as a whole takes an anti-Kanaka view, Australia will certainly not be provided with the spectacle of the southern States riding rough-shod over the northern. Rather will that view be in accord with the pronouncement of the Queensland people themselves at the general election.

### NEED FOR COLLATING FACTS.

Now, the foregoing remarks are made not with the intention of either upholding or denouncing the Queensland verdict, but in order to state in these preliminary remarks what I deem to be necessary preliminary facts. Pro-Kanaka Senators and Representatives from the north will, no doubt, in due course give their respective Houses the benefit of their experience, knowledge, and counsel, and anti-Kanaka members in each House will do the same. What "The Herald" realised in sending a Special Commissioner to the north was that here in the south few of us really possess enough information on the Kanaka question to ensure the formation of sound opinion. My purpose has been to collate facts on the subject, and even though my movements were rapid, and the survey often of a cursory character, the main essential facts will be presented in the course of these articles. The reader will be told fairly, impartially, and, at least, without conscious bias, how matters stand with the great industry in the north, who are engaged in it, how it is being carried on, what difficulties exist, and what are feared. Then on a basis of fact in relation to all the more important phases of the subject dealt with, the Australian citizen of the south, now privileged to aid in the control and liable to be affected by the affairs of the north, will be better able to determine the character and scope of his duty as a unit in the Commonwealth of Australasia.

## CHAPTER II.

### QUEENSLAND KANAKA LAWS.

South Sea islanders appear to have been first introduced into Queensland for the purpose of growing cotton. So far back as 1860 Sir Charles Nicholson, then President of the Legislative Council, presented to the Governor, for trans-



mission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a petition, asking for permission to introduce coolies from India. Planters and intending planters proposed to do this at their own expense, and on terms similar to those which obtained in the Island of Mauritius, where coolies were employed. The Secretary of State consented, on condition that the same protection was afforded to the coolies as they received under the Mauritius regulations. A Coolie Immigrant Act was passed by the Queensland Legislature in 1862, and regulations framed under it, but the terms were made so stringent that none of the planters availed themselves of the provisions, and, as a fact, no coolies were introduced. The Act proved quite inoperative, and has been repealed.

### THE FIRST SUGAR.

The late Hon. Robert Towns, a Sydney man, is credited with being the first to obtain Polynesian labor for the cultivation of sugar, on the Logan River. It was on the Logan that the first cane was grown, the pioneer of the industry being the late Hon. Lewis Hope, uncle of our Governor-General. He not only showed that cane could be produced, but erected the first sugar mill in Queensland. His enterprise was rewarded by the grant of 2000 acres of land in the northern part of the State. So impressed was the local Parliament with the great resources of Queensland as a country in which sugar and coffee could be cultivated with profit, that in 1863 regulations were made authorising the selection of leasehold land at 5s per acre, with a view of encouraging persons to engage in those branches of agriculture. The grants appear to have been first availed of in the Rockhampton district. Later on, the suitability of the northern areas having been demonstrated, the cane-growers went further afield, and employment of Polynesian laborers became extensive and widespread.

### SOUTH SEA ATROCITIES.

In those days it was that the white man manifested how vile he could be; in those days it was that atrocious outrages incidental to "recruiting," as the term is in the South Seas, called for the intervention of the Imperial Government. Murder was rampant in the South Seas, and the "birth stains" of the sugar industry in Queensland will not easily be

obliterated. Enticed by all sorts of specious means to place themselves within the grip of the rapacious and cold-blooded scoundrels who engaged in recruiting, islanders were ruthlessly torn from their homes and kindred. When they resisted, they were pitilessly destroyed. Witness, notwithstanding the law, the case of the *Hopeful*, in connection with which four men were sentenced to death, and others to terms of imprisonment, for murder on the high seas. And for wantonness of murder, causeless killing for the mere sake of killing, read the direful story of the *Carl* brig, and recall the evidence given here in Melbourne in connection with what was known at the time as the Mount and Morris case. Deep, black pages in Australian history do the records of these awful crimes furnish, and no wonder that the Imperial Government found it necessary to intervene. Surprise there may be that the interference did not come earlier. May not the explanation be that the British people simply refused to believe that such fiendish things were possible by the men of their own race?

### IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL ACTS.

What was given the short title of The Kidnapping Act, 1872, was passed by Lords and Commons in the year named. Its intention was to prevent and punish criminal outrages in the South Seas. Under this measure vessels carrying native laborers had to be licensed; power was given to seize unauthorised or suspected ships, and suitable legislative machinery devised. This Imperial measure was amended and improved in 1875. The principal of the present Queensland Acts regulating and controlling the introduction and treatment of laborers from the Pacific Islands was passed in 1880. This repealed some previous Acts and regulations, and rendered it unlawful to introduce Kanakas — "Kanaka" is a Polynesian word, meaning "a man" — except under the provisions of the new law, and declared those provisions to apply as far as practicable to the islanders in the colony. A vessel licensed to recruit had to carry a Government agent, and sureties were required from the masters of ships that the law would be observed. The fundamental principle was that there should be only voluntary enlistment. Provision was made that a decent amount of space



should be allowed to laborers on the voyage from their native islands to Queensland, and scales of rations and clothing were insisted upon. Section 12 declares that "no passenger (i.e., islander) shall be introduced who, in the opinion of the Government agent, is under sixteen years of age." Medical examination on arrival in Queensland, agreements between employers and employed, a minimum rate of wage, provision for the proper care of sick islanders during their term of service, and for their return to their native homes, all these are contained in this Act. It underwent amendment in 1884, 1885, 1886 and 1892. To save repetition, it may be well, therefore, at this stage to state in general terms the situation as it is today, having regard alike to the several Acts and regulations made under them.

#### HOW TO GET BLACK LABOR.

Labor recruits are usually obtained nowadays from Melanesia or the New Hebrides group. The chief contributing islands of Melanesia are Malayta, Gala, Florida, Guadalcanar and Makella (St. Christoval). The Hebridean islands levied upon are Anbrym, Abba, Sandwich, Tanna, Apie, Santo, Erromango, Macollo, Pentecost, Mai and Tongoa. The inhabitants of these islands present a great variety of tribes and language, and are by no means brethren dwelling together in unity. Quite on the contrary, the inter-tribal relations are usually marked by a fierce hostility. A Queensland sugar planter who wishes to get labor from the South Sea Islands, must in the first instance, apply to the Government Immigration Agent for a licence. He must state how many islanders he proposes to introduce, and the estate on which they are to be employed. A licence is only granted when the applicant satisfies the Minister in charge of the Act that he is engaged, or has made provision for engaging, in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture, and that the islanders whom he proposes to introduce are to be employed in such agriculture only. The Principal Act defines tropical or semi-tropical agriculture to mean:—

The business of cultivating sugar-cane, cotton, tea, coffee, rice, spices, or other tropical or semi-tropical productions or fruits, and of rendering the products thereof marketable.

By section 2 of the Amendment Act of 1884 the term "Tropical or semi-tropical agriculture" in the Principal Act, and that Act is defined to mean Field work in connection with

the cultivation of sugar-cane, cotton tea, coffee, rice, spices, or other tropical or semi-tropical productions or fruits; but not including—

(a) The business of engineers, engine-drivers, engine-fitters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, farriers, sugar-boilers, carpenters, sawyers, splitters, fencers, bullock-drivers, or mechanics;

(b) The business of grooms or coachmen;

(c) The business of horse-driving or carting, except in field work; or

(d) Domestic or household service;

And by section 4 of the Extension Act of 1892 it is declared to include the work of handling sugarcane and megass, but not to include any work in connection with the cultivation of maize, or the work of ploughing, or, except as aforesaid, any work done within a sugar factory or sugar refinery.

#### MORE OF THE CONDITIONS.

The applicant for a license to introduce Kanaka labor is required to enter into a bond, backed by two sureties, for a sum equal to L5 for each islander to be introduced, so as to provide for the return passage of each laborer at the expiration of his term of service. A sum of L3, commonly called the capitation fee, has to be found in cash in respect to each islander, in order to defray Government expenses. All fees, fines, and forfeitures under the Act go into what is called the Pacific Islanders' Fund. The "indenter," as the importer of Kanaka labor is usually called, makes his own shipping arrangements, but the master of a vessel carrying laborers has to enter into a L500 bond, guaranteed by two sufficient securities, before he gets a licence—first, as we have seen, required by the Imperial Act of 1872. It is expressly stipulated that persons employed in labor vessels are to get fixed wages, the Legislature having apparently in view some possible gruesome effects of an "easy accessible" payment by results system, though the regulations require that nobody shall be brought away without his full consent, and piously forbid recruiting on Sundays! In connection with the return of islanders, the captain or owner of a vessel is required to enter into a bond of L500 that the natives shall be landed on their own respective islands, and not dumped down anywhere, perhaps to be eaten by the cannibals of a hostile tribe. The Government Agent, a much-"instructed" person, borne by the recruiting ship has to be carried first-class free of charge, and boarded at the master's table; and the owner or the charterer has



to provide medicines, medical comforts, and appliances incidental to the emergency of accidents on a sea voyage.

### THE STATUTORY AGREEMENT.

On reaching the recruiting ground, labor is obtained under the supervision of the Government Agent, and on behalf of the indenter an agreement of service has to be made with each islander available. A schedule to the Act declares the form of agreement to be as follows:—

Memorandum of Agreement made this day between \_\_\_\_\_ of the first part, and the undersigned laborer from the island of \_\_\_\_\_, per ship \_\_\_\_\_, of the second part. The conditions are that the said part of \_\_\_\_\_ of the second part engage to serve the said party of the first part as \_\_\_\_\_ and otherwise to make \_\_\_\_\_ generally useful for the term of thirty-six calendar months and also to obey all \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ overseer's or authorised agent's lawful and reasonable commands during that period, in consideration of which services the said party of the first part doth hereby agree to pay the said party \_\_\_\_\_ of the second part wages at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ (not less than six pounds (£6) per annum each, to provide with the understated rations and clothing, as well as proper lodging accommodation and bedding, and to defray the expenses of conveyance to the place at which \_\_\_\_\_ to be employed, and to pay wages in the coin of the realm at the end of each six months of this agreement, and provide \_\_\_\_\_ with a return passage to \_\_\_\_\_ native island at the end of this engagement. No wages shall be deducted for medical attendance.

It will be observed that the minimum wage is fixed at £6 a year. Planters declare that they have sometimes to pay much more, but there is reason to think that this is one of the instances in which the minimum is also the maximum for the "indent boy"—that is to say, the Kanaka recruited for the first time. If, perchance, he has already served a term or terms in Queensland he has acquired knowledge, which is power, and he makes the bargain of the experienced. Both men and women are recruited for the plantation, and immediately on embarkation they become entitled to clothing. Each male has to be furnished with a flannel shirt, a pair of serge trousers; and each female with a winsey dress and a flannel petticoat. The recruit must also be supplied with a double blanket. Daily provision for each black passenger is prescribed by the Act as follows:—

	lb oz
Yams or potatoes . . . . .	5 0
Or rice . . . . .	2 0
Tea . . . . .	0 0½
Sugar . . . . .	0 2
Tobacco, per week . . . . .	0 1½
Pipes, per week . . . . .	One

### POINTS ON ARRIVAL.

On the arrival of a labor vessel in any port of Queensland the master has to report to the Immigration Agent or officer known as the Polynesian Inspector, stating the nature of his passengers and the names of the licensed employers, and he may not land any of the islanders until he receives a certificate. The prescribed form indicates points upon which the Government officer has to satisfy himself, and is as follows:—

I hereby certify that the master of the \_\_\_\_\_, which arrived from the Pacific Islands, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 18\_\_\_\_, has produced to me the necessary certificates, signed by the Government agent of the said vessel, that the whole of the islanders on board of the said vessel have voluntarily engaged themselves for service in the colony, that the licenses authorising him to introduce these islanders have been produced in all cases, and that by careful examination of the islanders I have satisfied myself that they have a proper understanding of the full meaning and effect of their agreements, and that they voluntarily entered into the same and that the agreements have been duly signed.

This "signing," by the way, is understood to consist of the islander touching the holder of the recruiter's pen while a X is being made.

### PHYSICAL FITNESS.

The master of the ship must supply a declaration as to the voluntary and deliberate character of the engagements, and must also declare that when the recruits were engaged "they were not known to be afflicted with any disease, and were neither maimed, halt, blind, deaf, dumb, idiotic, nor insane." The medical officer at the port of landing has to certify to the condition of the passengers, and should he declare that an islander is "physically unfit for labor in the colony" upon the master or owner of the ship deposes the responsibility of returning the recruit to the island whence he came. Doctors notoriously differ, and not a little heartburning has been caused in Queensland because an easy-going inspecting practitioner at the port of introduction has accepted islanders who do not come up to the standard



of fitness required by the Government medical officer at another Queensland port to which they may have been transhipped.

#### LABOR MAY NOT BE "FARMED."

Every laborer is registered on arrival. The employer at once takes charge, and is responsible for him. He may not transfer the service of a laborer without the latter's full consent and the approval of an inspector or police magistrate, whose business it is to see that the transferee is a person possessed of qualifications such as would have entitled him to get an indent license. Every transfer is the subject of a new agreement and of registration. Except on a transfer a laborer may not be employed on any land save that of the legal employer, the Act being apparently intended to forbid a farming out of boys. As a fact, lending is not unusual, and in order that the reader may judge for himself of its legality it would be well to quote Clause 20 of the Principal Act:—

No employer or other person, except in pursuance of a transfer duly registered, shall remove a laborer from the estate or place on which he was intended to be employed, as stated in the application for license or transfer, without the written permission of an Inspector, nor shall employ such laborer elsewhere than on such estate or place without like permission. Any employer or other person who so removes or employs a laborer without such permission except under a transfer duly registered, shall be liable on conviction to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds for every laborer so removed or employed.

Critics of the system say that there are many harder things on this earth than winning the consent of an inspector to a black labor loan.

#### RATIONS AND CLOTHING.

The Principal Act originally fixed the scale of rations and allowances of clothes to which a Kanaka was entitled. Under an amendment in 1892, the Governor-in-Council was empowered to vary the scale, and has done so with advantage to the laborer. The present governing regulation reads:—

DAILY RATION.	lb.	oz.
Beef or mutton . . . . .	1½	0
Bread or flour . . . . .	2	0
Sugar . . . . .	0	5
Potatoes (or rice 6 oz.) . . . . .	3	0
Tea . . . . .	0	6½
Tobacco per week . . . . .	0	1½
Salt per week . . . . .	0	2
Soap per week . . . . .	0	4

#### CLOTHING.

Males (each)—	Yearly.
Shirts (flannel) . . . . .	4
Trousers, pairs (moleskin or serge)..	4
Hats . . . . .	2
Blankets, pairs . . . . .	1
Females (each)—	
Chemises . . . . .	4
Dresses (wincey) . . . . .	4
Petticoats (flannel) . . . . .	4
Hats . . . . .	2
Blankets (pairs) . . . . .	1

All provisions and clothing shall be subject to the approval of the inspector. Blankets shall, except with the special permission of the Minister, be of not less than six pounds' weight.

#### IN CASE OF SICKNESS.

Elaborate provisions have been made in the Acts for the care of the Kanaka who falls sick. There are special provisions for establishing Kanaka Hospitals, but they do not appear to be much used. The chief obligation of the employer is imposed under Section 24 of the Principal Act:—

Every employer shall provide his laborers with proper medicine and medical attendance during disease or illness; and any employer who neglects to provide a laborer, when sick, with such medicine and medical attendance, shall for every such offence forfeit and pay a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, and not less than five pounds, and shall further be liable to pay any reasonable expenses incurred by an Inspector in providing such medicine and medical attendance.

As sick Kanakas are expensive, it pays the planter to keep them well, or, if they fall sick, to get them speedily cured. You are told by some Queenslanders that the solicitude for the sick Kanaka is not always so pronounced on the part of some employers towards the end of an engagement as it is at the beginning. Men will say these things.

#### NO DEDUCTIONS.

At the expiration of each six months of his engagement, the laborer has to be paid in current coin of the realm, and in the presence of an inspector or police magistrate, and the employer is not entitled to exact any deductions. He makes advances at his own risk, but it is said to be a rare thing for a boy to repudiate an advance. Unlike some of our sweaters who evade the minimum wage provisions by setting up a contra account for board and lodging, the planter may not have a store account against his "nigger." He must pay up in full, and if the money be not forthcoming the in-



spector may, on behalf of the islander, sue for and recover it in the police court.

### THREE YEARS AFTERWARDS.

At the end of his three years' term of service an islander has the right to return to his native land. The point is important, therefore it is well to quote the section of the Act bearing upon it:—

At the expiration of the engagement of any laborer, his employer shall either cause him to be returned to his native island, or if the laborer does not then desire to return, pay the sum of five pounds to the Immigration Agent, to be applied in defraying the cost of the return passage of said laborer when required by him.

That is the law on the matter, and as it plainly contemplates the possibility of the laborer desiring to stay in this country, obviously it touches a very serious phase of the Kanaka question. As a fact, a great many of the islanders elect to return. Those who remain frequently make fresh engagements, either with the first employer or with some other person using Kanaka labor, and usually this would mean an advance in wage. In 1896 there was tardy recognition of the fact that more Kanakas than is good for the health of Australia were electing to stay; that time-expired boys were finding their way into all parts of Queensland and engaging in all sorts of industry. This although in 1884 an amending Act declared it to be unlawful after the 1st September of that year "to employ any islander except under an agreement for service," or "except in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture." Employers could not get indent licenses unless they were engaged in such agriculture, nor could they employ their indent boys at the forbidden works scheduled above, but the law was easier evaded by those less liable to inspection, who never figure as importers, and who are yet regular employers of time-expired Kanakas.

### THE NELSON REGULATION.

Probably constrained thereto by these considerations, the Nelson Ministry made some notable regulations in 1896, the first of which is as follows:—

Every time-expired islander shall, within one month after the expiration of his agreement, be required either to return to his native island or to enter into a fresh engagement either with his last or some other employer; and any person found harboring any time-expired islander

who has failed to comply with the requirements of this regulation shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds.

One hardly needs to be a lawyer to suspect that this is *ultra vires*. Apart from some nice constitutional questions involved, there is doubtful, if any, warrant for it in the Acts of Parliament, and it would seem to be antagonistic to the spirit of Clause 23. It would be interesting to see by what process the regulations would be enforced in the case of a reluctant islander who preferred to "stay along Queensland," as he would probably put it. These 1896 regulations also forbid steamers to carry from port to port Kanakas who do not hold permits from the inspector, but, as the islander's movements by land are unrestricted, he can get about a good deal without appreciable inconvenience.

### ARMS AND GROG.

The Act of 1884 made unlawful the sale to any islander of firearms or ammunition, articles much coveted by the Kanaka, who, at the end of his period of service, is ready to return to his native island and renew his part in tribal warfare — for all Kanakas do not become converted in Australia—and a regulation of 1896 gives the police or inspectors power to seize firearms or ammunition found in the possession of an islander.

For the rest, the Polynesian inspector holds considerable necessary power, and is supposed to be in a position to protect the islander from tyranny, injustice, or cruelty. So far as my observations went, it is not often that his intervention — as against the commission of acts of downright cruelty — is called for nowadays, whatever the plantation conditions may have been a decade or two ago. No employer may "obstruct" an inspector, nor may anybody legally supply grog to Kanakas, but it is said that there have been inspectors who were susceptible to influences not usually described as obstructive. And it is beyond all doubt that Kanakas are supplied with probably the most awful mixture under the name of whisky to be found to-day on the face of the broad earth. Whites prepare it for him, and whites not infrequently, for the sake of a shilling or two, smuggle it to him. And for what happens to the savage afterwards, who is going to blame the enlightened and cultured civilisation of the Twentieth Century?



## CHAPTER III.

## PROHIBITION OF 1885 — ROYAL COMMISSION.

In 1885 Queensland resolved that she had for a sufficiently long period maintained the Kanaka system. The country had spoken decisively through the ballot box in 1883, and there was no room for doubt as to the will of the people on the subject. Giving the planters a period of five years' grace, Parliament decided that after the 31st December, 1890, no further authority for the introduction of Kanakas should be given. The whole thing was done in a few words. Clause 11 of an Amending Act assented to in November, 1885, reads as follows:—"After the thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, no license to introduce islanders shall be granted." The position appears to have been accepted by all parties—alike by the head of the Government and by the Leader of the Opposition. The question was declared closed, and attempts to re-open it were sternly discountenanced by party leaders. The policy of the colony appeared to be to insist upon a "White Queensland" at all hazards and all costs. A measure was passed with the seeming object of securing suitable white labor, not, strange to say, from amongst those vainly seeking employment in other parts of Australia, but from the toilers of Europe. This does not, however, appear to have resulted in any systematic immigration.

## CO-OPERATIVE MILLS.

Parliament took the view that if the large sugar plantations were divided into smaller holdings they could then be profitably worked by farmers, with the aid of available white labor. To help the industry in a practical way, and give the best chance to men who were henceforth to depend much upon such labor, a sum of £60,000 was voted by Parliament for the erection of two experimental mills in the Mackay district. In more recent years (1893-5) the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts were passed, and large sums of public money were passed for the purpose of establishing central mills, so that the cane might be crushed by growers' co-operations. The Registrar-General's annual report on the sugar industry—

some extracts from the draft of which I was courteously permitted to make—shows that the advances in this connection now represent the impressive sum of £497,245. The total indebtedness for principal and interest of those who received the money was, at the end of 1900 no less than £542,742. The State qua State has, therefore, over half-a-million in the sugar business. The relations between the planters, large and small, and these sugar mills are in many respects similar to those which subsist between our dairy-farmers and the butter-making companies in which they are the only shareholders. But the bonus having done its work, the butter factories are not State-aided; the sugar factories are. Only, it is true, to the extent of getting State "loans," for which, moreover, "security" is held, but the chance of ever seeing the money back, and the value of the security, would appear to be absolutely dependent upon the success of the sugar-growing industry. When considering our old and revered friend, "vested interests" on this sugar question, the Federal Parliament will be expected to keep in mind the Queensland Government's half-million. It is hardly likely to be forgotten. The pro-Kanaka orators take care that it is not.

## REPEAL OF THE PROHIBITION.

The Queensland Parliament, while carrying out the mandate of the country to discontinue the Kanaka traffic, neither treated the sugar industry with disdain nor left it to shift for itself. And the colony seemed to approve of considerable sacrifices being made, always provided it was quite understood that the Kanaka had to go. Yet in 1892 the prohibition of 1885 was unconditionally repealed, and recruiting from the South Sea Islands is to-day as active as ever—particularly active since the "White Australia" declaration in Mr Barton's speech at Maitland. Glancing at the circumstances under which this repeal was brought about, one's first impression is clear and deep. It is that while the leaders seemed to have accepted the voice of the country, the planters did nothing of the sort. No sooner, indeed, had the prohibition passed than the planters and their political friends set about the business of securing its repeal. The five years' grace afforded a generous interval for intrigue, and it was used with a wonderful degree of skill and, as we have seen, with per-



fect success. The general election of 1888 furnished the opportunity for a big struggle at the polls. While in most of the large centres and in many of the sparsely populated ones men opposed to colored labor were returned, the planters succeeded in putting some able men into Parliament—with what results has been indicated.

#### VIEWS OF PARTY LEADERS.

The general election of 1888 placed the Government of the colony in the hands of the late Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, but he gave no open countenance to the cause of repeal. On the contrary, during his candidature for Brisbane he was so impressed with the damaging effect of a rumor that he was in favor of continuing the Kanaka traffic after the period of grace had expired, that he deemed it necessary to write to the local press, declaring that if returned he would not disturb the prohibitive law. The Opposition was under Sir Samuel Griffith, and the view he took of the situation is quite clearly expressed in a party manifesto to the electors:—"And first of all comes the colored labor question, on which, indeed, depends our very existence as a free people. Every year that passes deepens my conviction that a free, self-governing population and a servile population not admitted to a share in the Government cannot permanently exist together in the same country. You will, no doubt, be told that this question is settled. I wish I could believe that it is settled. But I cannot forget that is is only a few months since the champions of colored labor, in prospect of a coming general election, discontinued for the time their unmeasured abuse of the Government for their action in this respect. I am unable to believe in the genuineness of their conversion, and think it more likely that if the opportunity offered, they would act upon the principle which they have always consistently followed, and let the future take care of itself, if only in the present they can make money for themselves and their absentee allies. Is this apprehension not supported by the fact that only a few days ago we were informed that a recent distinguished visitor has been proclaiming in England, as a settled and admitted fact, that the North of Australia must, in the future, belong to the colored races? I believe, on the contrary, that all Australia will be

needed by the white races. And I am convinced that the agricultural lands in the tropical part of the colony can be successfully and profitably cultivated by European settlers, working with their own hands, but as their own masters. I sincerely hope that the experiments lately initiated at Mackay with this object will have a fair trial, and that the prophets of failure may not be able to assist in bringing about a fulfilment of their prophecies."

#### THE COMMISSION OF 1888.

Neither party, then, was openly in favor of the repeal sought by the planters, and by the whole strength of the large labor vote in Queensland that repeal was condemned. It was necessary to proceed cautiously, and nobody knew that better than Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith. "When in doubt take the trick," is a policy advised by an experienced card-player. "When in doubt appoint a Royal Commission" is a principle quite as much favored by Governments which let "I dare not" wait upon "I would" and which have to deal with clever and insistent supporters who cannot be otherwise satisfied Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith appointed a Royal Commission. Three gentlemen were selected for the purpose of "enquiring into the general condition of the sugar industry." They were the veteran Liberal politician, Mr W. H. Groom, a sworn foe to the Kanaka trade; Mr A. S. Cowley, M.L.A., sugar planter, and the recognised leader of the pro-Kanaka party; and Mr H. E. King, also experienced in sugar growing, and, if not so prominent in his advocacy of black labor, apparently as convinced as Mr Cowley himself of the need of black labor to the continuance of sugar growing. The Commission issued to these gentlemen in November, 1888. They got to work early in the new year, and made rapid progress. They visited the principal sugar districts, took voluminous evidence, and finally delivered their reports, with 353 huge pages of closely-printed evidence, early in April. Smart Royal Commission work this, and a fine example to some of our supposed-to-be-more-energetic southerners.

#### SEPARATE FINDINGS.

"Reports" is the word I have used in respect to the findings of the Commission, because Messrs Cowley and King furnished one statement, and Mr Groom



a quite distinct and different one. It was not enough, apparently, for the chairman to dissent from particular paragraphs. He was constrained to submit a wholly separate finding. Each report is voluminous, and the closely studious of the question dealt with would find the perusal of both necessary to a complete comprehension of the situation. It is sufficient here to make such extracts as are salient to a general understanding of findings on the part of the last officially authorised persons who inquired into the Kanaka traffic, took evidence on oath, and put forward the conclusions which furnished the chief warrant for the repeal of the prohibition of 1885. It is not pretended that they furnish the only warrant, for the supporters of the repeal are known to rely also upon the experience afforded by the depression in the sugar growing industry between the delivery of the Commission's report, and the date of the repeal. Still, the Royal Commission is even now the sheet-anchor of the pro-Kanaka party, and it would be alike improper and unphilosophical in any treatment of the question under review to either ignore or belittle it.

#### VARIANCE ON A MATTER OF FACT.

First may attention be drawn to the conclusions arrived at by the agreeing Commissioners (Messrs Cowley and King), as distinct from those of the chairman (Mr Groom), on what would seem to suggest themselves as matters of fact, rather than of opinion. The majority report says:—

From the evidence obtained, we estimate that the capital invested in the sugar industry of the colony is about L5,000,000 sterling; the machinery alone represents a value of L1,000,000; the annual expenditure is scarcely less than L800,000 sterling; and the value of the sugar exported is about L800,000. The number of white Europeans who are permanently employed in the sugar industry cannot be less than from 2000 to 3000; the total number who are more or less directly interested in the industry, and whose livelihood almost depends upon it, cannot be less than double that number; and the officer in charge of the Labor Bureau at Townsville assured us that 70 per cent. of the immigrants were engaged for the plantations, and the number of Polynesians who are engaged in the industry is about 6000. The wages of the Kanakas amount to about L50,000 per annum, whilst that of Europeans, not including managers, would amount to L200,000.

Mr Groom, on the same data, says:—

I estimate that the capital invested in the sugar industry of the colony ranges from L4,000,000 to L5,000,000 sterling. The machinery alone represents a value of L1,000,000; the annual expenditure is scarcely less than L700,000 sterling, and the value of the sugar exported is, in good seasons, about L800,000. For the season ended on the 31st of March of this year, the quantity of sugar exported was 17,000 tons, which, at L20 per ton, represents a value of L340,000. The number of white Europeans who are permanently employed in the sugar industry cannot be less than 2000 to 3000; the total number who are more or less directly interested in the industry cannot be less than 10,000 persons; and the number of Polynesians who are engaged in the industry is from 6000 to 7000. The wages of the Kanakas amount to about L50,000 per annum, whilst that of Europeans would amount to L100,000.

These reports are interesting as showing what may be called the cash value of the sugar industry, and cash value is all in all to some folks. As Tennyson has it.—

. . . the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that honor feels.

But it is certainly a little remarkable that two clever men on the one side, and a third on the other, should come to such different conclusions as to the amount of wages paid to Europeans that the former say it is L200,000 and the latter declares it to be only half that sum.

#### THE MAJORITY ON BLACK LABOR.

Now, what says the majority report upon the salient question under review in these articles? Let it be admitted that both these reports deal with a great many interesting and strictly kindred matters, but these, to avoid prolixity, I am compelled to rigorously exclude from present consideration. Here are the essential extracts from the majority's finding:—

In answering this question, "Can sugar be profitably grown in Queensland without the employment of cheap colored labor?" we must divide the colony into two sections, North and South, taking Townsville as the boundary between the two. In the districts north of Townsville all the cultivated land, except a small quantity on the south side of the Herbert River, is scrub of the richest description, which after felling and burning has to be cultivated with the hoe for six or seven years until the stumps have rotted out, when horse implements can be used.

In this district there was absolute unanimity amongst all the witnesses examined that white men could not cultivate cane. Putting on one side altogether the evidence of planters and employers of labor who have tried to get field work done by white labor ineffectually,



we find the small selectors all telling the same tale. At Port Douglas, Mr Jones says, "Europeans will not cultivate with the hoe." (Question 56.) "Withdrawal of black labor means shutting up Northern districts" (215). Mr Johnston says, "Five months in the year whites cannot work" (485). Neither white men nor horses can do the same work as in the South (528-535), and he gives as a proof of this the result of a contract for clearing with which he was connected (556). Mr J. J. Montgomery, the most successful selector at Port Douglas, says, "The scrub must be cleared before white men can cultivate profitably" (774-5). Mr Tresize says that he could not cultivate cane with his family (847). Mr Walker, an old settler on the Downs, who is now on the Mulgrave, says, "White men do not work well at cultivation on his farm" (1467). Mr Mackay says, "I cannot do the same amount of work as in the South" (1498). Mr W. H. Truss, an employee on Goondi Plantation, would not do weeding or trashing (2708), and Patrick Moloney, a ganger in charge of Kanakas there, would leave the place before he would do it (2738). Whilst we were at Geraldton the Divisional Board laborers declined to work until the weather got cooler (3029-31); and George Kerr, a selector, says that those who once were against black labor there, are now in favor of it (3346), and that he would not weed, trash, or cut cane; and the Herbert River farmers tell the same tale."

In the districts south of Townsville a different condition exists. Here white laborers can work without such great danger to life or health, but they dislike the hand work in the field so much that they will not willingly undertake it, and never continue at it long, and then the question arises whether, though they can do the work, it can be done by them profitably. In considering this question we must look to the market which our sugar growers have, and the competition which they have to meet it. In a good season three-quarters of the crop of Queensland sugar is exported, chiefly to the Melbourne market, and one-fourth is consumed in the colony. In Melbourne, that which is exported comes into free competition with the sugars from Mauritius, Java, and China, which, the European market being flooded with beet sugar, are now thrown upon the Australian market, and the price of our sugar is therefore brought down to the level at which they can afford to sell theirs. Even for that portion of the crop which is sold in this colony growers do not get the full benefit of the protective duty of £5 per ton, the price in the colony being governed to a considerable extent by that obtainable for the export, but they net on an average, perhaps £2 per ton more for the sugar sold in the colony than for that exported. And the price for the exported portion of the crop is governed by the cost at which the foreign producer can afford to place his sugar on the Melbourne market.

Now, in the Mauritius, sugar is grown by coolies whose wages are a shilling a day without rations; in Java the cost of labor is six-

pence a day, and in China probably less; whilst in Fiji, again, coolies are employed at one shilling per working day. In Queensland, however, at the present time, allowing for the cost of introduction fees payable under the Pacific Islanders Act, wages, rations, and all other expenses, it is calculated that Kanaka labor (indented) costs about sixteen shillings per week, or considerably more than even the European laborers employed in the production of beet sugar receive. If it were not that the soil and climate of Queensland is particularly adapted to the growth of sugar, it would clearly be impossible to continue the competition even on those terms. Even as it is, any increase in the cost of production means the destruction of the industry. And the employment of white labor for hand work in the field, even if it could be obtained, would mean a very great increase in cost. It will be seen by the evidence that most of those witnesses who thought that sugar could be grown with white labor were careful to explain that it could only be grown by settlers working solely with the help of their families, and not employing hired labor. Even a number of the shareholders in the Government central mills at Mackay expressed themselves satisfied that sugar could not be grown with white labor, and repented having signed the conditions on which the money for these mills was granted to them, and the only instances in which we found sugar successfully grown with white labor, at the present time, were at three small mills in the Logan district, belonging to German settlers, who seldom employed hired labor, and at the plantation of Mr S. Grimes, M.L.A., on the Coomera. Mr Grimes's success, however, may be accounted for by the fact that, situated as he is in a populous district, his labor costs him less than a Northern planter has to pay for his Kanakas, since Mr Grimes has not to keep his men during the slack season, but gets them only when, keeps them only as long as, their labor is necessary, and in addition to this he has, of course, a great advantage over the Northern planter in freights and costs of all supplies.

From the evidence laid before us, therefore, we have come to the conclusion that even in that part of the colony lying south of Townsville sugar cannot be grown profitably, at least for export, without the employment for hand work in the field of a class of labor cheaper and more suitable for the work than white labor.

#### THE CHAIRMAN'S FINDING.

The foregoing represents the views of two investigators, who are known and recognised to be personally in favor of Kanakas. Now let us look at the report of the chairman, equally well known to be consistently opposed to black labor. From Mr Groom's finding I quote as follows:—

"Is Queensland in a position to do without the sugar industry, or to confine the cultivation of sugar to white labor exclusively?"



And in answering that question we are bound to look at all the surrounding circumstances of the case. The climate north of Townsville is essentially tropical, the scrubs are an impenetrable jungle, and from the evidence placed before the Commission it is evident that they will cost an enormous amount of money to clear them and render the land available for agricultural purposes. Further, immediately the scrub is cleared, malaria arises, seriously detrimental to the health of Europeans and destructive to human life, as has already been proved in the construction of a line of railway from Mourilyan plantation to Mourilyan harbor. It is the opinion of all who have had experience of the districts north of Townsville that the dense scrubs of the Johnstone, and the Barron, and the Tully, and the Russell cannot be cleared by European labor. At present agricultural labor by Europeans on their own freehold land in the districts now under consideration is evaded as much as possible. Thus in the district of Cairns the whole of the agriculture outside sugar growing is carried on by Chinese. There are from 1200 to 1500 Chinamen in the Cairns district, and the evidence of witnesses, including that of the Crown Lands Ranger, affirms the fact that were it not for the Chinamen there would not be an acre of land under cultivation in Cairns outside the sugar plantations. A central rice mill has been erected a short distance from Cairns, and last year there was manufactured in it 700 tons of rice. The whole of the "paddy" was grown by Chinamen, so that the mill may be said to be practically kept in existence by Chinese labor. Homestead selections have been taken up in the Cairns and other districts, both under "The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876" and "The Crown Lands Act of 1884." The selectors reside on their selections, but for the first five years they lease their land to Chinamen on a clearing lease, at 1s per acre per annum. Thus, while the Chinaman is absolutely fulfilling the conditions of selection, the selector is receiving a profit of 9d per acre from the land. At the end of the first five years another agreement is made between the selector and the Chinaman, and the cultivated land is then let at the rate of 1l an acre per annum. In one case a homestead selector holding 160 acres had 130 acres cleared in this manner, and he has now for himself eight acres, with a garden planted by Chinese, while 122 acres are let to Chinese at 1l per acre per annum, and this is apparently the general mode in which agriculture is carried on in a large portion of the Northern coast districts. At Herberton, where the climate is much colder, and where productions of a more temperate zone can be grown, European labor finds a fitting outlet, but without question in the coast districts north of Townsville there is, in a great many instances, a disposition on the part of Europeans to have nothing whatever to do with agriculture, until the land has been cleared and made ready for cultivation. Consequently, if the question "Is Queensland able to do without the sugar industry, except on the basis of a white population?"

is answered in the affirmative, then undoubtedly a very large portion of the coast districts of the north will not be cultivated, at all events for a long time to come, and from L4,000,000 to L5,000,000 of capital which has been vested in the sugar industry will be wiped out of existence, and the whole of the population now dependent upon the sugar industry for a livelihood will, for a time, and until new industries arise, be thrown out of employment. Can Queensland at the present time afford to do this?

Not the most fervid lover of the semi-slavery which, beyond all controversy, the Kanaka system means, could fairly weighing the whole cost, the chairman say that Mr Groom has not, in the foregoing declaration, honestly and straightforwardly put the whole strength of the pro-Kanaka case. Yet he remains anti-Kanaka. Not in ignorance of what he does, but fully knowing and carefully of the Commission strenuously opposed the repeal of 1892. It meant, he knew, material sacrifice to Queensland to exclude the Kanaka. He thought, and still thinks, that the circumstances justify the full measure of sacrifice involved.

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### COMMISSION EVIDENCE USED IN DEBATE.

The Queensland Parliament having given planters five years' grace, and determined that no licenses should be issued after the 31st December, 1890, the first successful counter-move was, as I have endeavored to show, that represented by the appointment of Royal Commission. The salient features of the majority, and also those of the minority, report, have been quoted. The Ministry of the Day being, apparently, unimpressed, it became necessary to make a further move. This was done in June, 1889—that is to say, eighteen months before the expiration of the period of grace—and the leader was Mr Cowley, M.L.A., one of the Commissioners. With both the Government and the Opposition against him, his task was no easy one, but the hon. member addressed himself to it with characteristic vigor, and a very great degree of skill. He brought the subject before Parliament under cover of a motion (ultimately rejected by 21 votes to 5), which af-



firmed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable, early next session, to adopt some means of encouraging the sugar industry." On this there were lengthy debates, at intervals extending over several months, for it was not until October that the division was taken. It may, with a certain amount of force, be argued that pretty well all phases of the subject were presented during that debate, of the tone and character of which the Queensland Assembly as a deliberative body may well be proud. Indeed, it is only because the conditions of 1901 present a vast growth of interests which were only subjects of speculative contemplation in 1889, that fresh research would now appear to be necessary, in order that new legislation may be fair to all concerned. In some 300 closely-printed columns of "Hansard," are the speeches preserved, and it is desirable that southern students of the subject should at least get a sketch of the way in which, on both sides, the work of the Royal Commission was used as a foundation for argument for and against the repeal of the prohibition of 1885. It has seemed to me essential, before entering upon a description of the present situation, to use the material available, in order that the reader may know why Queensland in 1892 so completely and unconditionally reversed her policy. With the reasons before us for what so many regard as a backward step, we may be able to judge whether they are justified by the facts of to-day.

#### "PLANTER" AND "FARMER."

The man who holds much land, runs sheep or cattle upon it, and is, therefore, reputedly wealthy, is colloquially alluded to as a "squatter." His neighbor, on a small area, even though engaged in precisely similar pursuits, and putting only a fragment (if any) of his holding under cultivation, is called a "farmer." The distinction is really more social than industrial. A like distinction there seems to be between the many-acred and the few-acred man in the north. The former walks before a carefully discriminating world as a "planter," the latter is only a "farmer." It is difficult to stir a popular chamber by a recital of the woes of a "squatter" or his social equivalent, the "planter;" still more difficult to influence it by a statement of his views and opinions. Therefore, when a member would

speak impressively he uses the "farmer." What, in fact, the "poor widow," or "the old and slow worker" is to opponents of industrial regulation, the "poor farmer" has become to the advocates of Kanaka labor in Queensland. When the Legislature passed the prohibition of 1885 it relied upon the "farmer" to see the sugar industry through on white labor. We have seen that to help him to do so it has voted over half a million of public money in order to establish central mills. When the report of the Royal Commission was debated in Parliament the advocates of the Kanaka saw plainly that their most convincing argument must be one which showed that the farmer wanted the Kanaka. Yet the farmer is a human being, imbued, as most humans are, with the desire to make the greatest amount of profit he can out of his undertakings. If in addition to other advantages offered he can get labor at from 10s to 15s a week in preference to paying 20s or 30s, he may be relied upon to take it. Moreover, you may be reasonably certain of his aid for any effort which others are making to get it, so long as he "stands in." He may have—often has—differences with the big planter whose neighbor he is, whose tenant he may be; but the cause of cheap labor is a common cause, and that the champions of the Kanaka in the Queensland Parliament were shrewd enough to perceive.

#### THE CONVINCED FARMER.

By way of demonstrating that the "farmer" was convinced of the impossibility of growing cane without the aid of black labour, the evidence of a Mr Jones, of Port Douglas, was relied upon:

By Mr Cowley: Were you offered a Government central mill here?—Yes, a central mill was recommended by Mr Hodgkinson.

Why did you decline it?—Because we could not comply with the conditions.

What particular condition?—The condition that we objected to was that we must not employ anything but European labor in cultivating and crushing sugar.

Was that the sole reason for your declining the offer?—Yes.

You had no objection to mortgage your land to the Government; the labor question was the only reason for your objecting?—Yes. I would have mortgaged my land to the Government but for the labor clause in the agreement, and as proposed I knew the scheme would be a failure, and I did not want to mortgage myself to the Government when I knew in my own mind that it would be a failure.



Here, it was argued, is a man in humble circumstances, not a "planter," but a "farmer" who wants to grow cane, who has not the means of erecting the necessary mill, and is, therefore, dependent upon the Government for it. Yet he will not accept what was alluded to as a "tempting offer," because, honest man, he is satisfied of the impossibility of cultivating sugar with European labour. "Very valuable" was Mr Cowley's description of this evidence. It would not, of course, suggest itself to the single-minded hon. member that Mr Jones, as a person holding sugar land in a place recommended as suitable for a mill, would probably have a very clear perception of the fact that the mill plus Kanakas would pay him much better than the mill minus Kanakas, and that it was sound business policy for the moment to wait and watch and pray!

#### ON THE LABOR SIDE.

Obviously, however, it was insufficient to put forward the views of those standing in the relation of employers, actual or prospective, and who, however virtuous they might be in the abstract, were reasonably suspect of bias when the question was whether they would prefer to pay very low or much higher wages. What did labour itself say on the subject? To tell the truth, it can hardly be said that there were any representatives of labor examined. Investors, managers, farmers, graziers, inspectors, but no laborers in an inquiry chiefly about labor! For lack of better evidence, may be, Mr Cowley relied primarily upon the evidence of a plantation ganger. There are some, we suppose, who will hardly accept a person in that position as a quite free and independent representative of labor. A sublime confidence in the absolute integrity of one's fellow-man is, of course, destructive of the unhappy suspicion that such a witness would be unlikely to give evidence adverse to the planter who employed him. Remember the witness was on oath. But just as in the abstract, the Mayor of Melbourne would hardly be the most suitable person to testify to the views and desires of the corporation labourers; just as in the abstract the best evidence as to the sentiments of wharf labourers would hardly be expected from the manager of the shipping company employing them; so the evidence of a ganger (presumably in charge of a band of Kanakas)

does not, *prima facie*, impress the southern mind as the best evidence of white labor sentiment on the question under review. Now let us look at the testimony specially selected by Mr Cowley:—

Have you seen any Europeans engaged in field work?—No; excepting driving horses and ploughing. They do not work in the cane.

Would you, as a ganger, like to do the same kind of work as the Kanakas?—No, not on any account.

Why?—Because it is too hot.

But supposing you were paid 30s a week and your board for doing it?—I would do some part of it, but not the whole of the work that they do.

How long have you been living in the Northern district?—Seven years.

And you have not undertaken any work of the kind yourself?—No, none.

Would you do so?—I do not think I would.

Have you ever been put to the test?—No, never.

Have you always found abundance of other employment?—Yes.

Do you know of your own knowledge that any of your countrymen have refused to do work in the cane field?—No, not that I ever saw; I never saw them asked to do the same work, only part of it.

By Mr King: What wages would you take to engage to do trashing and weeding, the same as the Kanakas?—It would be a large amount; I should not like to do it for a good deal. If I tried, I do not think I would be able to stand the work as well as a Kanaka.

If it was the only work offered to you, would you take it or hump your drum?—I would hump my drum first.

\* \* \* \* \*

What work have you been engaged in during the seven years you have been in the colony?—Different kinds of work. At first driving a team of horses in the Mackay district. I was eighteen months at that; it was my first job. I then got a mob of boys on the same plantation. Then for two years I was employed plate-laying on the railway, and the remainder of the time I have been on this plantation.

By the Chairman: Do you think that plate-laying on the railway is as hard work as hoeing in the cane field?—You are better paid for it.

#### THE REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM.

"He could not do the work," said Mr Cowley impressively, "even if he were paid as well as he would be for other work." I quite believe that ganger. Apparently he is a steady, capable man. He was able to tell the Commission that he had "always found abundance of other employment," and it is hardly likely that he would prefer cane-trashing to more agreeable work, which he is pretty sure he can get at better wages. If the



argumentum ad hominem were seriously to be used as members sought to use it in that debate, we should soon reach the point of absurdity. Let us put an extreme application, and call, say, Sir John Madden:—

“What is your occupation?”

“Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice of Victoria.”

“Suppose you were offered the post of ganger in a colliery?”

“I would not take it.”

“If you ceased to be Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice could you find other employment?”

“Yes, I had ‘abundance’ before being elevated to the Bench.”

Now the position of ganger in a colliery is an honorable and useful one. It is not very agreeable. Neither is it agreeable to work in a ship’s hold discharging coals, nor to stand up to your knees in water at drainage or reclamation works. Does anybody seriously argue that because all men prefer agreeable work to disagreeable that therefore the disagreeable cannot be done by white labor? The answer can only be in the negative, and yet it is hardly an exaggeration to say that this is the effect of the argument based on that ganger’s evidence during the discussion in the Queensland Assembly.

#### OTHER PRO-KANAKA EVIDENCE.

Other evidence quoted on the pro-Kanaka side was intended to prove that much-talked-of characteristic of the white, his “unreliability.” For instance, a Mr Pearce, storekeeper, at Mackay, had given evidence:—

Is it your opinion that the planter prefers the Kanaka to the European on the grounds of cheapness?—Not altogether. White men are not reliable; there is no doubt of that. They are very apt, at the time you most require them, to take offence and demand their money. If they stop on they are offensive and lazy, and hence they are not what we call reliable. Therefore, the settler who does his own work is safe, but if he goes beyond that it is a question whether he can make a success of cane-growing with white labor only.

A Mr R. R. Smellie had testified as to the result of bringing white labor from the old country:—

Then, if I understand you rightly, it was your intention to work this plantation with white labor if you could have got it?—That was our intention. I tried to get men out, and got thirty to come here at from L30 to L40 a year, a salary we could afford to pay them. But

the new chums had not been here long before the white men in the district commenced to tell them that they had come out here to take the bread out of their mouths, and that they had been imposed upon. This made them discontented, and a discontented man is a worthless man.

Is that the way the thirty hands engaged by Mr Hamilton in London were made discontented?—We think so.

Then it was not because they could not do the work; but because they thought they were not getting sufficient wages?—That was it. They would not work for less than the ruling wages of the colony, and there is no sugar plantation in the colony that can pay the ruling wages of the colony and grow sugar at a profit. I have no doubt myself that sugar can be grown by white labor up to a certain state. But that is not the question to be solved. The question to be solved is whether it can be grown at a profit. If it cannot be grown profitably and to compete with the world, it must cease to exist. That is my thorough conviction.

For the rest it was argued in effect that the Kanaka was respectable and law-abiding, that the stories of horrible things done by him were exaggerated, and that it was in the best material interest of the white population that in order to provide for the work of the sugar fields the importation of natives of the South Islands should be continued.

#### THE OTHER SIDE.

This Parliamentary discussion was marked by several interesting speeches on the other side, but they need not here be referred to in detail. The address of Mr Grimes is probably the most noteworthy. The hon. member was himself a witness before the Royal Commission. He took the opportunity which the debate afforded of “getting even” with one of his judicial tormentors (Mr Cowley), whom he accused of acting less as a Commissioner than as a cross-examining barrister, holding the planters’ brief. That, quite apart from Mr Grimes’s statement, is the impression produced upon the mind of any dispassionate reader of the record. But, what is more to our purpose, Mr Grimes argued that the report disclosed “sufficient evidence to prove that Europeans can do the work.” It is necessary, therefore, to now submit this evidence, and consider whether it is any more weighty than that quoted on the other side. First, the testimony of Mr Walsh, chairman of the Divisional Board (equivalent to our Shire Council), at Port Douglas, was re-



lied upon to show that in tropical Queensland the white man may live and work:—

By the Chairman: Do you think that the climate here has any serious effect on Europeans clearing timber off land?—I do not. I am acquainted with timber-getters and those men worked in the scrub for years and are healthy men still. Some of them have been working in the scrub for twelve years and are still strong men.

Do you know, of your own knowledge, that Europeans would not refuse 30s a week and rations to clear scrub?—I know they would not.

Then there was the evidence of Mr Trezise, farmer and selector:—

What labor do you employ in cultivation?—Myself and the boys. You can get nothing but Chinese here, and we have some difficulty in getting them.

Practically you work your homestead by yourself and family?—Yes.

How does the climate affect your health?—The climate is very good as far as we are concerned.

And you are able to do your work on your farm without any bad effects?—Yes and my children also.

Then practically you are satisfied with the district, the climate, and the results of your operations?—Yes, with the oranges.

Plainly, however, what these witnesses said relates to the general effect of the climate. Scrub-cutting is incidental to, or, rather, preparation for, sugar growing, but it is not equivalent either to trashing or cutting cane. There are those in the north, who say it is more trying work, but that by the way. The witness who referred to oranges was a fruit-grower. Was Mr Grimes able to quote any more direct proof of the capacity of white men to work in the cane-field? Yes, he found the evidence of Mr Walker, whom he describes as the only practical farmer in his district:—

What description of labor have you employed?—Mostly European and Chinese. I have never had a blackfellow yet.

What wages do you pay European?—£1 a week, and sometimes 30s and rations.

Even at those wages could you make your farm pay?—Yes, if they would work. They don't work. Sometimes you may get an odd man to work. A man who will take a month to hoe an acre of land will not do much.

If you grew cane for a central mill, at what price per ton could you afford to sell it?—I would be glad to take 8s if the mill was near at hand. That is, 8s cut and put on trucks.

Do you mean that you could grow, cut and deliver cane on trucks at 8s per ton?—Yes; I could do better at that than at growing wheat at Toowoomba.

Have you had any experience in growing sugar cane?—Yes; in Brisbane.

And selling it?—No; I left that to others.

Did you grow much there?—Forty-five acres.

How was it that it did not pay the grower?—Sugar got low in price, and it did not pay.

"That," said Mr Grimes, "is the evidence of a man who used only white labor." "And Chinese," was the prompt and pertinent punctuation of the observant Mr Cowley.

## THE QUESTION OF PAY.

To prove that it was only a question of pay, Mr Grimes quoted the statements of witnesses who professed willingness to give as much as £40 a year and board. They said that it was difficult to get white men at that wages, and more difficult to keep them at it when higher wages offered. This latter fact can hardly be regarded as a startling surprise. Even ministers of religion are addicted to answering "calls" which increase their incomes. Then Mr Grimes turned to the evidence of an acting manager of Innesfail estate (Johnston River):—

I suppose that as acting manager of this plantation you are friendly disposed to your countrymen. Are you of opinion that plantation labor is suitable for European labor?—The greatest part of it.

And Europeans can perform it?—Yes, they can.

And the heat and the climate is no obstacle to their performing it?—No, not a bit. I have not heard them complain much about the heat.

Then what is the work that you would put the Kanaka to?—I would put him to hoeing, planting and cutting cane.

Is the European capable of doing that?—Yes. This was definite enough in regard to mere capacity. Interesting and instructive, to, in an important phase of the whole matter, is the evidence of Mr Canny, also a plantation manager:—

From your experience of twenty years, do you think it would pay to grow cane by white labor exclusively?—I believe it would if the land was cut up into small blocks, and worked by people having families of their own. I believe it will never pay in any part of the north that I have seen to attempt to cultivate or grow cane with wages men.

Then from the knowledge of the district you have, and your experience in Maryborough and on the Herbert and Johnstone Rivers, do you think the climate in this part of the colony suitable for families settling on the land, as you mentioned just now?—I do.

## CAPACITY AND WAGES.

On the associated question of capacity and wages, perhaps the most effective



quotation was that of the evidence of Mr Rosendahl, a farmer on the Herbert River:—

I asked what labor you had employed for the growth of sugar-cane, and you said you had employed white men, Chinamen and Kanakas. I desire to know whether there is anything in the cultivation of sugar-cane that a white man is incapable of doing?—I do not think so; but he is not willing to do it. You cannot get him to do it.

You said just now that white men could do the work in the cane field, but they were not willing. You have been a working man yourself, have you not?—I have, all my life.

If you were looking for a job, and you were offered wages to trash cane, would you take the job?—It all depends on the wages.

It is hardly practicable to reproduce all the quotations, but it would not be fair to omit that of the evidence of Mr Robertson, of Mackay:—

By the Chairman: How long have you been living in this district?—Fifteen years.

And how long have you been an employer of labor?—Eight years.

What labor have you employed during that time; have you ever employed colored labor?—No.

From your experience in this district during the time you mentioned, are you of opinion that in this part of the colony sugar-cane can be grown profitably with white labor?—Yes.

By Mr Cowley: Profitably?—Yes, on the central mill system; if you can get the right sort of people to grow it—white people, who will go to work.

And you would be satisfied to go on extending your area with white labor, getting fourteen tons to the acre. Would that pay you for your outlay and the interest on capital?—Yes, I would be quite satisfied with fourteen tons an acre at 10s a ton, which would be £7 an acre.

The reader has now much of the sworn testimony relied upon by both sides before him, and may judge for himself on which side the weight of evidence is.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE KANAKA BRIDGE.

It would be unnecessarily laborious work to trace through all their ramifications the many political events which brought about such a tremendous reversal of opinion in the Queensland Legislative Assembly elected in the eighties. Sir T. M'Ilwraith (supported by the old squatting and black labor parties) got into office after the general election in 1888. He resigned at the end of the session to go on a long trip, and handed the position

of Premier to Mr Morehead. In 1890 Sir T. M'Ilwraith quarrelled with his former colleagues, and joined with Sir Samuel Griffith (leader of the Opposition) to turn them out. They succeeded, and Griffith became Premier. We have seen that the motion submitted by Mr Cowley in 1889, and which simply affirmed that it was desirable to adopt some means of encouraging the sugar industry, was defeated by 21 votes to 5. So strong was the feeling antagonistic to black labor, so great the opposition to the idea that anything should interfere with the prohibition against the issue of any further license to import Kanakas after the 31st December, 1890. During the debate on that motion, the most asked for was that the period of grace be extended for five years. It was represented that if this were done the planters would be able to arrange to accept the new conditions. But Parliament was then obdurate, and nothing could apparently be more stern and uncompromising than its negative.

### GRIFFITH ON THE OBJECTIONS.

So the period of grace fixed by the prohibition ran out, and the issue of licenses was stopped. Of course, that did not interfere with the black labor then in Queensland. Meanwhile, let it be understood that there was no abatement in the activity of those who sought to reverse the policy of the country. To their schemes the unsatisfactory character of the financial situation in Queensland largely contributed. Sir Samuel Griffith, the head of the Government, was undergoing a very trying experience, politically, and, it is said, personally. The coalition with the M'Ilwraith party, then headed by Mr Morehead, was the one way out of a sea of difficulties with which these articles have to do only in an incidental way, and the price which Sir Samuel Griffith had to pay on entering that curious partnership was the virtual surrender of his opinions on the black labor question. During the debate of 1889 we find him talking in this fashion:—

As to the importance of the sugar industry, that argument might have been used in any part of the world, and to audiences who had never heard of Queensland it must have commended itself as being obviously true. It might have applied with equal force with respect to a West Indian island on which sugar had been produced over a similar area to that in this



colony. The very same argument was brought forward in the slavery days. It is the well-known old argument that used to be used in support of slavery. It may be used wherever any agricultural industry is carried on.

But the greatest objection is that, according to the spirit of our Constitution, every man in this colony is equal, and is entitled to share in the government of the country; and we cannot afford to have amongst us men of a servile race who cannot be admitted to a share in the government of the colony. That is a fundamental objection. If we intend in Australia to govern on the principle that we shall be a free community, and an English-speaking race, we cannot afford to admit men of an alien race amongst us whom we cannot allow to enjoy the privilege of having a share in the governing of the country. Those are the reasons—which are, I think, conclusive—in the minds of the people of this colony against black labor.

#### THE "KANAKA BRIDGE."

The man who expressed these sentiments was able, in February, 1892, to so materially modify his views that we find him issuing the famous manifesto, referred to in local politics as Griffith's "Kanakas bridge." This document declared that as the large estates were then being sub-divided, the necessity for black labor would now disappear altogether. Nine and a half years have passed since then, and I was told in the north that far from disappearing, the necessity is continuous. "Some action," says the manifesto, "must be taken to bridge over the interval which must necessarily elapse before the change of system could be brought about." In 1889, five years was asked for, but the "some action" of Sir Samuel Griffith meant double as much. Here is a quotation from the manifesto:—

Adequate provision must, of course, be made for preventing abuses in the introduction of laborers, and for preventing them from entering into competition with white laborers in other occupations, and it should be provided that the immigration shall continue (unless, of course, otherwise determined by the Legislature) for a definite, but limited, period of, say, ten years. By that time I have no doubt that such further developments will have taken place as will enable the sugar industry to be carried on without fear of our reverting to the former system, with its dangerous incidents and consequences, and in the meantime I believe that a valuable impetus will be given to the producing industries of the colony. Obviously, then, the "Kanakas Bridge" was to last ten years. For, by this time, the coalition had been arranged, and the numbers were up—this time on the side of black labor.

#### THE NEW POLICY.

The Houses met the following month, and the following clause in the Governor's speech indicated the policy of the Government:—

The conditions of the sugar industry in the coast lands of Queensland has for some time attracted the attention of my Government, and it has become abundantly manifest that under the conditions of the existing law a sufficient supply of labor is not available to enable this industry to be extended or even maintained in its present position. Many efforts have been made from time to time by the Legislature and the Government with a view of encouraging Europeans to undertake this work, but hitherto from various causes without success. The matter appears to my Ministers to be pressing, and to demand immediate action. It is well known that a considerable supply of suitable labor can be obtained from the Pacific Islands, whence many Islanders are willing and anxious to come to Queensland. You will therefore be invited to remove the restrictions which now exist upon the importation of laborers from those islands, and also to make such provisions as may be necessary to prevent them from entering into undue competition with European labor in other industries.

By the time the Repeal Bill was submitted to Parliament the hopelessness of the new situation was apparent to all who felt deeply in opposition to the Kanakas, and who had looked forward to the time when, save for the few who might choose to remain, Queensland would be free of Polynesians.

#### THE OPPOSITION.

Our present Postmaster-General, Mr Drake, led the forlorn hope, by which the Bill was opposed. Both sides appeared to have concurred in the idea that the measure was the better without a provision fixing the period for which the renewed issue of licenses would be permitted—the pro-Kanakas, because they wanted indefiniteness on the point, the anti-Kanakas, because they hoped to get an early repeal, and disliked the implied contract with the planters involved in naming a period. The first test of strength took place while a shelving amendment of Mr Drake, that the repeal Bill be read that day six months, was before the Chamber. Mr Cadell, one of the Opposition, moved that the debate be adjourned, and was defeated by 31 votes to 16. The House sat on after midnight. In the small hours of the morning Mr Drake's amendment was rejected by 37 votes to 15, and the second reading was carried. Of the minority Mr Drake and



Mr Groom are in the Federal Parliament. (Since this was written Mr Groom has died.) None of the majority is there, and, strange to say, that majority includes Mr Grimes, who now finds himself cheek by jowl with the Mr Cowley, against whom he had so valiantly done battle in 1889. Other times other manners, I suppose he and his retracting friends thought, as they once more opened the door of Australia to the South Sea Islander.

#### VESTED RIGHTS.

Before the Bill was finally passed, Mr Drake made an effort to minimise the obligation which it might be inferred the State assumed in respect to the planters who would receive the benefit of the measure. He sought the inclusion of a clause declaring that no vested rights should be created under the Bill, but was unsuccessful. He was told that legally no such rights could be created, and the technical accuracy of that contention must be admitted. The question that arises now is whether, as the Legislature was invited to make the declaration and deliberately declined to do so, the moral effect has not been to establish such rights. It seems to me that this is a point which every just-minded member of the Federal Parliament must consider. Particularly so as the measure which had the effect of authorising a renewal, for an unlimited period, of the issue of licenses to import Kanakas, and incidental to which there was a deliberate refusal to declare that no vested rights were to be created, was followed a few years later by legislation authorising grants for the purpose of establishing central sugar mills, under conditions which I have already described. It was largely owing to the remarkable in-and-out character of the Queensland legislation I have endeavored to sketch, and for which, in order that readers might have a reasonably full comprehension of the situation, I have claimed so much space, that on the day of my return from Queensland I told "The Herald" interviewer that the question seemed to be largely a tariff one. "Queensland," I said, "can almost produce sugar enough to supply the whole Commonwealth, will do so with fair seasons in a year or two. As a set-off to what we may demand in labor conditions we are able to ensure to the growers an absolute monopoly of the market, to give

them the fullest protection against both the cane sugar grown by cheap, colored labor in Java, Mauritius, or the Philippines—nearly all the Fiji produce goes, I think, to New Zealand—and also against the bounty-fed beet sugars of Europe or any other country. And recollect that to make a difference of a penny a pound to the consumer a duty would need to be L9 7s 6d a ton."

#### COMPENSATION OR PROTECTION.

Without presuming to claim that this expression of opinion was specially in Mr Drake's mind when he spoke in the Senate recently, obviously it might stand in the relation of text to the hon. gentleman's speech. "If," he remarked, "we are going to say to the sugar producers in Australia that they must produce their sugar by means of white labor, then I think we may be fairly asked to put such an import duty on sugar as will prevent the Queensland product from having to be sold in competition with sugar that has been grown by wholly black labor." A little later on he observed, "I have asked that a duty shall be put on which will shut out sugars coming from countries that are employing black labor almost exclusively, and, I say, that unless we are willing to incur a charge of being hypocrites, I do not see how we can set ourselves to shut out black labor from Australia and at the same time be prepared to take the product of black labor from other countries." More particularly, he might have added, since the growing of sugar in Queensland has been State-aided in a double sense (1) in the sanction given to a system of semi-slavery, and (2) in over half a million in grants by way of loans to the co-operating growers who have established central mills. The legislation which encourages persons to enter into the business of licensed vic-tuallers is held to carry with it a moral obligation to compensate a publican the renewal of whose licence is refused, although in strict law the contract with the State terminates with the year for which the licence is issued. Queensland legislation has given at least some kindred rights to those who under its ægis embarked in the sugar-growing industry. Quite beside the abstract merits of rival fiscal policies, it is now a question of what form compensation should take when the Kanaka traffic is abolished. Shall it be by a Treasury grant, or shall



it be by favouring incidence of tariff? The Federal Parliament has no money out of which to provide the former, therefore it seems to me that the latter is as inevitable as it is logical and fair. Observe that I am taking it for granted that the Federal Parliament will not wholly ignore either the doings, or what may be reasonably implied by the doings of the Queensland Parliament. That would be alike unwise and unjust. It would also be unconstitutional. Section 119 of the Commonwealth Act says:—"Full faith and credit shall be given throughout the Commonwealth to the laws, the public acts and records, and the judicial proceedings of every State." If that means all that we Australians in voting for it supposed it meant, it is a declaration that consequent upon the transfer of power, once exercised by a State, to the Commonwealth of Australia there shall be no act of repudiation, no act even bearing the appearance of repudiation, by the transferee in respect to the business of the transferor.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DEATH RATE.

I had not intended at this stage to touch upon that grim phase of Kanaka labor disclosed in the mortality tables of Queensland. But it would seem to be desirable to use the earliest opportunity to answer a remark made by the "Argus" in commenting upon the recent speech of Mr Charles McDonald, a Representative who stated that the Kanakas die at the rate of 47 per 1000, as against 12 per 1000 of the whites. The paper remarks:—"It would be interesting to know if there are any figures to show what is the death rate of the Kanakas in their own islands. No one has so far advanced anything on this point, and it may be that 47 per 1000 is a decrease on their island rate of mortality." Now, that is a point which at once suggested itself to my mind when, during my recent visit to Queensland, I came to realise what an awful sacrifice of human life was involved in the continuance of Kanaka labor. Therefore, I made particular inquiries, and interviewed several people who had lived in the islands, and might be supposed to know something on the subject. I could not discover that the death rate in any of the islands was

exceptionally high, except, it might be, when tribal wars were exceptionally prevalent. The Rev. William Gray, of Adelaide, speaks out of his experience as a missionary on the subject. He says:—

We have no exact statistics from any of the groups where labor is recruited for Queensland, except from one or two islands; but these show that the death rate is about 12 per 1000. On the part of Tanna, known to me, I have good reason for thinking that the death rate would be about the same. I think it would be a fair estimate to say that on Christian islands the death rate is about 12 per 1000, and about 15 per 1000 on heathen islands where war prevails. There is no reason for thinking that the death rate is abnormal in any of these islands. One thing in fact is quite clear. Had the death rate there been anything like as high as it is and has been in Queensland these South Sea Islands would have been without inhabitants long ago. But the full significance of these figures is only realised when we remember that they represent the death rate of the pick of the males from the New Hebrides and other groups.

### FACTS AND FIGURES.

Specially observe those last most significant words. The last official figures of the Queensland Registrar-General relate to the year 1900. For that year the Kanaka death rate is given at 39.75 per 1000, in contrast with 12 per 1000 for the whole population of the State. The same authority tells us that "the death rate for infants (in Queensland) is nearly ten times as great as that of the total population, ranging from 9 to 11 per 100, while the white death rate ranges from 11 to 15 per 1000." Now, when it is remembered that there are practically no Kanaka infants, that the 39¾ per 1000 means a mortality incidental to "the pick of the (Kanaka) males," one may grip the idea of what this traffic in human beings is. As a matter of fact 34½ per cent. of the total deaths in Queensland in 1899 were of children under five years. No Kanaka, who appears to be under sixteen can be legally imported. On the other side it is proper to say that the Kanaka deaths for 1899—347 out of a mean Kanaka population of 8729—included from 35 to 40 of the 250 persons who were victims of hurricane in the Cook district, and to this cause may be principally attributed the departure from the proportion of 1898, when the Kanaka death rate was 29 per 1000. The death rate is particularly heavy, it seems, amongst the newcomers. and a registrar told



Mr Gray that "an examination of facts and figures made it probable that the death rate among Kanakas six months in the colony was as high as 180 per 1000." That was written in 1895. Recently Mr S. . Martin, A.I.A., London delivered an address at Brisbane dealing with the principal causes of deaths in Queensland, and on his authority I give here the experience for twenty years. In 1875-9 the death rate of Polynesians in the State was 70 per 1000; 1880-84, 100 per 1000; 1885-9, 75 per 1000; 1890-94, 50 per 1000; 1895-9, 35 per 1000. I can find no evidence that the death rate in the South Sea Islands exceeds the 12 or 15 per 1000 estimated by Mr Gray. The fact that the high rates in Queensland, even under present admittedly improved conditions, apply to adults—"picked men"—must be kept clearly and prominently in mind in order that the full force and dreadful significance of the figures may be fully realised.

## CHAPTER VII.

### HOW THE CANE IS GROWN.—THE CAIRNS DISTRICT.

Land used for sugar cultivation in Queensland is for the most part private property. It has been purchased from the Government or from the original private holders—for there has been a good deal of changing hands—and today it is, I understand, virtually all alienated. It is not, however, all cultivated by the owners, a great deal of it being held by farmers on varying terms of leasehold. Usually the lease gives purchase rights or is of a character which transfers leaseholder into proprietor after a stipulated number of years. With these tenures it will be my business to deal more particularly later on. It is necessary, however, here to state that for the most part the virgin sugar country is scrub land and that he who has heart and grit enough to undertake the business of clearing it and preparing it for sugar usually expects to have a large say in its future. As the scrub is of a varying density and much depends upon the class of labor employed it is difficult to fix upon a figure which could be fairly regarded as the mean cost of clearing. The work may be done for £2 or £3 an acre; it may run into £6 or £8, and yet pay to do. The

richest soil is sometimes heavily timbered, as, without being an agricultural expert, one can easily understand. The scrub is cut and burned, the rubbish gathered in heaps, and then without more ado the farmer can plant his cane. He does not plough the virgin soil nor does he remove the roots of the trees. He gets to work with the most suitable implement—and a hoe does wonders in the light soft moist soil—to make fines of holes, from twelve to eighteen inches deep, and usually five feet apart, and into them he drops pieces of sugar cane from nine to fourteen inches long. A "set," as each piece of cane is called, contains two or three internodes, and near each of the joints is an "eye." A "set" is placed in each hole, these are hoed over, and then the earth holds three, five, or, it may be, ten years' crop. It is the simplest planting imaginable.

### THE GROWING CANE.

"Ill-weeds grow apace" is the proverb, and the truth of it is demonstrated in these rich sugar lands. For several months it is a fight between the growing cane and the rank indigenous vegetation that would choke it. The husbandman must keep weeding until the cane has got a firm grip upon the land, till the roots strike in, and the growing stalk makes such demands upon the nutritive properties of the soil that the weeds are vanquished, which is usually the case when the cane has attained an age of from four to six months. By that time the centre and upright stalks of the bunch which springs from each root are from five to six feet high, and by that time, also, the outer ones shooting out at all angles have met those of the neighboring bunches on each side, and the unaccustomed observer standing without sees mere jungle. As each cane grows, broad, sword-shaped leaves unfold, rather than spring, from it, the movement being progressive from the earth upwards. These leaves are nature's perfect envelope, in which the infant cane is nurtured, by which it is protected, and which serve only these ephemeral purposes. For the leaves are quickly shed, and soon fall in great masses upon the ground between the plants. This is the "trash," and it becomes the next matter of concern to the watchful cultivator. When the cane is perhaps eight or ten months old the accumulated trash forms a bed a foot or



more deep upon the ground, and unless removed prevents the access to the lower portions of the cane of that sun and air which are deemed essential to the most profitable fructification, while the dead and dying leaves of higher growth cling feebly to the developing cane, now fast growing in both length and circumference. The trashing process consists of removing by hand the fallen leaves, and tearing away those about to fall. This "trash" is piled between the rows of cane, and, given reasonably favorable conditions, at a year, or little more, from the date of planting the crop of sugar is ready for the reaper.

### CUTTING THE CROPS.

Cutting cane is still done by hand, and with a knife suitable for the purpose. There is talk of a machine, but only of a hand machine, and an inventor has, I understand, gone to America to get it first patented there. Do not imagine that it is anything of the reaper and binder kind. It is merely a new and better implement than the cutting knife, but equally dependent upon an intelligent and adaptable human being, who must first strike at each cane of the bunch close to the ground, and then sever the leaf-crowned top, which may be far overhead—for the cane grows to twelve and fifteen feet in length—or, although of the same root cluster, be almost level with the earth. It is the season when steam is up in the crushing mill, and all await the operations of the cutters. But the cane must be clean and leafless, and it is the business of the cutter to so pass it out of his hands before loading the trucks standing in readiness on the tram lines, which, in most districts, now run through the sugar fields and place them in direct communication with the mills which they respectively serve. The operations are, then:—

1. Clearing the land.
2. Heaping the rubbish.
3. Holing.
4. Planting.
5. Weeding.
6. Trashing.
7. Cutting.

### RATOON CROPS.

These being all accomplished in their several seasons, the first crop has been garnered. But what is not generally understood is, that out of those same cane roots, ratoons, as they are called,

that is to say new crops of cane, spring year after year. First, second, third, fourth, fifth, yes, up to tenth ratoons, sometimes before there is any new planting. At Geraldton I heard of a sixteenth ratoon which paid to cut. "Plant cane" indicates the first crop from the plants, "first ratoons" the next, then "second ratoons," and so on. Between crops the farmer may run his plough through the land, and ease it for its future work. The trash is then ploughed in, and helps to make the soil fruitful. Such is the effect of sugar growing that after about the third year the roots of the original timber have completely lost their old tenacious grip of the soil, and the final grubbing is comfortably done with a spade. When what is regarded as a sufficient number of ratoon crops have been grown, the plough gets to work in earnest, old roots, like the trash, being ploughed in. No "holing" is needed this time, the plant "sets" of cane being laid in the furrows, and a light harrow passed over the field. Once more there is plant cane in the ground, the kindly earth begins her work anew, and we have a repetition of the operations I have thus roughly sketched. Bar droughts and severe frosts, a succession of several years' crops is almost certainly assured.

### A FARMER'S ACCOUNTS.

That the first season's returns may not cover the initial expense, the reader may, perhaps, best understand by reading the subjoined statement. It was given to me in writing by Mr T. Wilcox, a Geraldton farmer, who had prepared it in connection with a business transaction, and it applies to last season. Here are the figures, presented in the farmer's own fashion:—

Falling, per acre . . . . .	£2 0 0
Cleaning-up, per acre . . . . .	1 5 0
Holing—3000 per acre, at 2s 6d per 100 . . . . .	3 15 0
Plants, cane, 2 tons per acre..	1 4 0
Planting, per acre . . . . .	0 10 0
Weedings—3 at 15s per acre ..	2 5 0
Road making, per acre . . . . .	0 12 6
Trashing, per acre . . . . .	0 10 0
Cutting, loading, and hauling to tramway (25 tons per acre) . . . . .	3 2 6

Total cost per acre . . . .	£15 4 0
Cane sold, 25 tons per acre, at 11s per ton . . . . .	13 15 0
Deficiency first year, per acre	£1 9 0



As 25 tons per acre represents a fairly heavy crop, Mr Wilcox has evidently got a piece of fertile land, and with reasonably good fortune, his ratoons will be profitable, for, obviously, much of the above expenditure is non-recurring. The work was done by Kanaka labor.

#### ABOVE THE FROST.

It must be at once conceded to all who argue that work in a sugar-cane field is not fit work for white men that the parts of the world where cane can be successfully grown are not climatically the most agreeable. On the contrary, they include some of the most disagreeable. A certain amount of cane is produced in Australia in the temperate zone—in the northern portions of New South Wales, and in southern Queensland. But indisputably Australia's best sugar lands are those which lie within the tropics, those particularly sufficiently north to be beyond the frost line, which, for all practical purposes, may be drawn at about 20 degrees from the equator. It is true that the important sugar district of Mackay lies south of this, but then it does not escape the frosts, fatal to the young cane, which do such a great amount of damage in the sugar fields around Bundaberg. It is not suggested that these are poor sugar districts, but when one talks of the best and means what he says, he has to turn towards that part of the continent in which frosts, although not entirely unknown, need not be seriously reckoned with.

#### THE TROPICAL HEAT.

Great things have been done, and will be done in sugar-growing in sub-tropical Queensland, but when the naturally suggested primary inquiry arises, "Why do so many men prefer to go to the far north in order to grow sugar?" the whole answer is not contained in the words "Because the land is cheaper." For it is also because sugar cane is particularly susceptible to frost, and, therefore, there is greater surety of operation beyond the frost range. That is the advantage. The disadvantage is that the farther north you go the more trying for Europeans are the climatic conditions. The mean summer heat in the northern parts of Australia is from 85 to 95 degrees, as contrasted with a mean summer heat in Melbourne of about 65 degrees. Moreover, it is a very "long summer"—to use the colloquial term—that of the far north. In fact, there

is hardly any winter. And instead of the dry heat to which the Victorians are accustomed, and find it hard enough to bear, on the low-lying strip of coast which forms the best sugar land, it is a moist heat. This is always the most trying to human beings of our race—energizing the men, almost destroying the women.

#### TOWN OF CAIRNS.

The furthestmost point to which I travelled in search of information on the sugar industry was Cairns. This unlovely and yet important seaport is situated in about latitude 17 deg. south, and a description which declares it to be "almost flush with the water's edge" is literally exact. With its alleged picturesqueness I have nothing more to do than with its stagnant pools and make-believe street channels, ill-looking, worse-smelling, redolent of fever, and a perpetual demonstration of the virility of those who live beside them. Cairns is about 900 miles north of Brisbane, and stands at the mouth of Trinity Inlet. Protected by the Great Barrier Reef, it is a good seaport, and the natural outlet for large and important mining districts, including the famous Chillagoe. Indeed, the greatness of the mineral resources of this part of Queensland is a fruitful theme for its leading citizens. My concern with it arises from the fact that nearly 12,000 acres of land are under sugar cultivation in the district (Cairns and Port Douglas), and that, if there is any part of Australia where the field work incidental to sugar-growing is hard for Europeans, it is assuredly round about Cairns.

#### RAIN AND SUN.

It is a singularly prolific district, and eminently suitable for tropical products. Along the inlet and on the banks of the Mulgrave river the sugar land is, and huge sums of money have in the past been invested in it. The soil contains in large degree the constituents suitable for cane-growing, and the two atmospheric conditions essential, plenty of sun and plenty of rain, may be relied upon. It is part of the country of phenomenal rainfall. Not so far inland, i.e., on the other side of the coastal range, the drought-stricken graziers, with flocks and herds dying on all sides, look into the face of Ruin, while at Cairns up to April last the rainfall had actually ex-



ceeded 100 inches for the present year! Here, as on the Johnstone river, they measure the rainfall in fathoms rather than in inches, and are disposed to think that they get rather much of the good thing only a twentieth part of which would mean salvation to the unhappy run-holders inland. As much as 50 inches of rain has fallen at Cairns in a single week. "Nothing will stand that but sugar cane," said a witness before the Royal Commission of 1889. "Once you put sugar in here you may be sure of a crop."

#### THE PEOPLE YOU MEET.

It was my good fortune at Cairns to meet what, by the way, you always meet, in Queensland—most kindly, courteous, and hospitable men, who count no trouble too great which is undertaken for the convenience and comfort of a visitor. In this connection I am indebted to Mr A. J. Draper, chairman of the Mulgrave Central Mill Co-operation, Mr Hansford, of Burns, Philip and Company, and Mr Thomas Munro, chairman of the local Divisional Board. None of these gentlemen favors the Barton policy of stopping the Kanaka traffic. All are of opinion that the continuance of the Kanaka is essential to the continuance of the sugar industry in the Cairns district. Yet, when, later on, my inquiries were pursued amongst those who hold diametrically opposite views, I found no greater frankness, no more perfect willingness to furnish facts. But at Cairns one does not readily discover people who are against Kanaka labor. It is proper to say that the dominant feeling is strongly in favor of retention. Large planters I did not meet here, therefore do not pretend to give their views at first hand, although it is not difficult to guess them. It was more essential to my purpose to ascertain what the smaller holders thought on the subject. At Cairns it was very much the same everywhere such men were met.

#### PREVAILING SENTIMENT.

"We do not like the Kanakas, but sugar growing at present prices cannot be carried on without them, or some such laborers, and quite irrespective of prices, we cannot get white men to do the work."

That was a view expressed by a farmer, and is substantially what they all said.

"Do you mean that white men cannot stand the work?" I asked the farmer.

"Well," was the reply, I will not go that far. Many who have tried, can't stand it; some can and won't, and I hardly blame them—particularly if there happens to be good wages for whites at something else."

"You work at the cane yourself?"

"Not at the same work as the Kanaka does. I do my own ploughing, but I don't trash. That is work only fit for a Kanaka, and I pity the white man who would have to do it."

This conversation describes, I repeat, the general sentiment of the Cairns district, and, as it was held before I saw the work which has to be done, I give it first. Upon what that sentiment is founded and how far it is justified by the circumstances we shall see.

#### WHAT THE "BOY" COSTS.

At Cairns it was reckoned by some that the indent boy costs £30 to get, including the payment of £5 for the return passage. In addition to his wages (anything from the minimum of £6 a year) it is estimated that he costs, on an average, from £8 to £12 a year for food, clothes and medicine, and some expert calculators, who, it is proper to say, believe in Kanakas, declare the average cost of the new boy, all things counted in, to be from 12s to 16s a week. This is modest in comparison with some calculations I met with further south. The time-expired boy in the Cairns district freely re-engages, and is as freely re-engaged, at a wage of from 10s to 12s a week, with rations, and it is reckoned that he costs, on an average, about 18s a week. The theory is that a time-expired boy must re-engage or go back to his island, and there is a regulation to that effect. In an earlier article I expressed the opinion that this regulation is ultra vires, and could not be enforced against a boy who said that he would neither re-engage nor leave. A re-engagement may not be legally made for a shorter term than six months. The boy must "sign on" in the presence of a Polynesian inspector, the representative, in the eyes of the Kanakas, of that powerful entity," known amongst them as "Big Fellow Government."

#### THE INSPECTOR'S LEANING.

The inspector's duty is to visit the plantations, see that the law is being observed, and that the Polynesians are getting all that is legally due



to them, and are decently treated. He is the recipient of all complaints which the boys may have to make, and they are credited by the planters with a greater readiness to make their troubles known than I believe to exist. I saw nothing to make me believe that the Kanakas are inveterate grumblers. On the contrary, it is their passivity which makes them so much more "reliable"—to use the planters' favorite word—than anything so spirited as a European. Be this as it may, one is assured that the Polynesian inspector "always leans towards the boy," and that this unhappy penchant places the planter under a continuous and awful dread of doing the said boys any injury. By the way, I was told at Cairns that inspectors impose fines on boys who are held to be disobedient or who desert. So far, I have not succeeded in finding the regulation which gives this power. It is certainly not contained in any Act of Parliament, and, if there be a regulation, I should be disposed to question its validity. The fines are said to range from 5s to £2, and presumably the money goes into the Polynesian fund—not into the pockets of the planters.

#### KANAKAS GET GROG.

No publican may legally supply a Kanaka with grog. The penalties are severe, involving possible loss of license and even the imprisonment of the offender. It is notorious, however, that at Cairns the Polynesians are supplied with liquor—the very worst, probably, that the earth holds. Chinamen may buy liquor, and do so, with a view of re-selling to the Kanaka at a substantial advance in price. Not only Chinamen engage in this nefarious business. There are low whites who do it, caring for nothing but the profit, because 300 or 400 per cent. advance on the publican's price is readily obtained from the thirsty Kanaka who has acquired a taste for the beverages of civilisation. Quite recently a white man was fined £10 for supplying a Kanaka with grog.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### ON A SUGAR PLANTATION— KANAKAS AT WORK.

About eight miles in a westerly direction from the town of Cairns is the well-appointed farm of Mr Thomas Bennie. Hardly extensive enough are his operations to

warrant the belief that he is destined to be of the "aristocracy" which the gifted Miss Shaw thinks Queensland may grow out of the Kanaka traffic. Whether, by the way, that would mean the evil tree bringing forth good fruit, or only fruit of its kind, obviously depends upon your habit of looking at the ordering of affairs in this defective world. In our Victorian sheep country there is the "squatter," whose sheep are numbered in tens of thousands, the "small farmer," who figures on the district show programme as the "holder of less than 500 sheep," and the intermediate person, socially inferior to the "squatter," and socially superior to the "small farmer," who is described as the holder of "not more than 3000 sheep," and for whom special classes are devised by the show committee. If Mr Thomas Bennie's concern were sheep, instead of sugar, he would, probably, appear in that intermediate class. For he is neither wealthy "planter" nor struggling "farmer."

He is just a very comfortable person, with a good slice of excellent sugar land. A good type of yeoman, in middle life, well, but lightly, built, hard as nails. A man who has made his own way by courage, perseverance and solid work, a man whose habits of industry acquired in this process have become a part of his being, and form a perpetual disqualification for indolence. A man, too, it is proper to add, who knows that brain is, at least, as valuable as muscle, who, therefore, keeps eyes and mind always open, the result being, that his methods are well up to date, and he is able, at meetings of the district planters, to offer valuable suggestions for their guidance, and to enrich them with the fruits of his own experiments with the new. Some of these things I learn from my friend, Mr Draper, on our drive to the farm; others I discover from personal observation and conversation with a very interesting man. Mr Bennie received us with true Australian courtesy and kindness, and I got my first experience of what sugar-growing means under his guidance, and in his fields.

The weather was hot, but it was a comparatively cool day for the Cairns district. So I was told—rather often, I thought. There was, too, an occasional sigh in the air, which furnished all the justification I could discover for a further statement with which the local folks lavishly punctuated our conversation.



"Ah, but there's a nice cool breeze to-day," was what they said, whenever a reminder seemed necessary that what one saw and felt in the second quarter of the year must not be regarded as representative of the awful conditions of the last quarter.

#### INTO THE CANE BRAKE.

"Have you any boys at work?" Mr Bennie was asked, as we drove up to his door, and by a bit of good luck caught him as he was starting on a round of his fields.

"Yes," was the reply. "I've got a gang trashing, and I'm just going out to see them. You had better come with me."

With that the stalwart planter, who was himself on foot, sprang into our buggy, took the reins, and steered us through his wealth-laden lands. What does not grow in them! Oranges and bananas abound in this tropical country, and Mr Bennie is not a man to waste a rood of earth. He grows almost everything that the district produces with any profit, but primarily his business is to grow sugar. He has obtained a thorough mastery of this business, and he does it well. Presently our horses were halted on a tram-line which runs between the fields of growing cane, then from six to seven feet high, and presenting to my unaccustomed eyes a hardly penetrable maze.

"You don't want to go into the cane, I suppose?" remarked Mr Bennie, interrogatively.

"On the contrary," I replied, "if you don't mind, that is precisely what we do want."

"But you know it is very trying," rejoined the planter. "It is as much as I can do some days to even walk through it. Of course this is a cool day."

"If you will allow us, we'll risk it. I understand you've got men working somewhere in there?"

"Yes; all right," was the cheery reply, and then, turning to a sort of generally useful Kanaka who had been summoned to hold our horses, the farmer commanded, "Go find boys; come long me."

Into the dense mass of cane, heavy with the great, broad, sword-like growing leaves, and thick and rank with the "trash" formed by the leaves that had fallen, the Kanaka darted, and immediately disappeared.

For a few minutes we waited, and heard some encouraging time-beguiling

stories of how foolish whites sometimes go into the cane brake, and are carried out unconscious. Presently we heard a shout—somewhere it seemed to us in the middle of the next field.

"There they are," exclaimed the farmer; "come on." With that he plunged into the crop, and we followed.

#### THE LINE OF LEAST RESISTANCE.

It was most convenient to go in single file, for the excellent reason that the planter knew his way, and, moreover, understood best how to open a passage. I followed close behind him, stepping with soldierly precision into his tracks and so "locked up," as the military term is, that my face was always close up to the back of the leader's neck. It is a useful instinct that which under troublesome conditions promptly suggests the easiest course, for under the circumstances all the hard work fell upon Mr Bennie, while I marched behind him in comparative comfort. That there was any regular passage was not, at first, obvious; that we were not fighting our way through what might have been so much scrub was, at the outset, hard to believe. But after a while I realised that our guide was in a most matter of fact fashion making his way along one of the avenues between the rows of sugar cane, systematically pushing right or left the overhanging and interlocked cane, and that, far from being very difficult to the man who knew what he was doing, it was so easy that our previous impressions of what it involved gave place to wonder that we had with such ridiculous ease been deceived.

So often does it happen that the appearance frights much more than the thing itself. Nowhere is this more glaringly manifest than it is in connection with the work of sugar cultivation. A few minutes before I had been standing outside that crop of cane wondering how in the world human beings got through it; now I was inside and—although still letting the robust Binnie lead and make my passage the easier—quite satisfied that if by any chance he should have been called away I could have gone on unassisted. I mention this here because the experience is so typical of others gained in the sugar fields. At a distance some operations are positively appalling; get close up and



you find them not half as bad as you thought, or, if half as bad, that's all.

#### WHAT IT FELT LIKE.

But what about the atmospheric conditions now that we were in the middle of the cane field, now that we had reached the conditions which it is roundly declared are too awful for white men. Muggy, steamy, hot and very trying it unquestionably was. There is no denying that; and particularly so I should imagine it was all that to the unaccustomed, to men who like two members of our party were in a cane brake for the first time in their lives. I make no attempt here to minimise the discomfort of the conditions. Of course, we visitors were much over-clothed for such an excursion. The planter, in a shirt open at the neck, and a pair of trousers, was sufficiently dressed for the occasion, and although he has undergone years of acclimatisation, the mere exertion of walking very soon bathed him in a profuse perspiration. It can be understood, therefore, what we new chums suffered, and how we appreciated the delicate fragrance of consolation offered in these oft-punctuating words quoted before—"Ah, but there's a nice cool breeze to-day."

"Breeze be blowed," I am afraid one of us exclaimed in sheer revolt of credulity when the remark had been made for about the twentieth time, "no wind gets in here."

"No," remarked the farmer, "that's the trouble. There may be a nice breeze outside—as there is to-day for instance."

"Yes, yes," I broke in, "please do not say any more about to-day's breeze. You were remarking—"

"Oh, just that it might be blowing outside, but the wind doesn't get in here."

No more it did. Nothing could be more absolutely calm, not to say stagnant. The odor was not unlike that which one gets in a warehouse where a large quantity of raw sugar is stored—only worse, because of the presence of the rotting "trash." I do not say it was in itself difficult to bear, but in that atmosphere of dank, stewy heat, it made one more factor of discomfort. Over our heads the vegetation met, and completely obscured the afternoon sun, and under foot we sank ankle deep in the soft wet soil, and boots and clothes suffered. Then on the leaves of the growing sugar-

cane there is a nasty and very minute thorn. This plays the mischief with tender hands, into the most vulnerable part of which it plunges, by way of resenting the intrusion of those who naturally use the backs of their hands in thrusting aside the leaves which bar their path. These thorns are so far poisonous that each, I am told, causes a festering sore unless it is immediately extracted. I took care to dig some out on emerging from the field, and suffered no after-inconvenience. Altogether, then, it will be seen (1) that the density of the cane-field is not so awful as it looks; (2) that the air is hot, steamy, and very trying; (3) that field work amongst the sugar-cane is for the hard-handed.

#### THE TOILING GANG.

A cry close beside us discloses the fact that we had reached the locality where the boys were trashing. In fact, we had nearly passed the gang, for it was not possible to see more than a few yards on either side when in that tangle of vegetation. Mr Bennie changed direction to the right, and three Kanakas seemed to rise from the earth at our feet. Young men they appeared to be, somewhat short in stature, but stout-limbed, strong and muscular. Intelligent they looked, and, although for the life of me I could see nothing very joyous in their circumstance, not unhappy. Each was clad in just two garments, and worked bare-footed. The men reeked with sweat, and their rags suggested that they might recently have been dipped in a pond. It may be doubted whether, all things considered, they would not have worked more comfortably quite naked, as white men used to work—may, for ought I know to the contrary, still work—in both the "char end" and the "wash-house" at the Yarraville Sugar Refinery.

"Go on," commanded Mr Bennie, for the boys had ceased work, and were gazing with dull curiosity at the visitors.

Two of them at once resumed trashing, but the third stood still for a moment, whereupon Mr Bennie performed some pantomimic waving of hands and arms, indicative of tearing the dead leaves from the canes.

The Kanaka nodded and fell to.

"He's deaf and dumb, that boy," explained the planter.

"Indeed," I said, "did he come to you like that."



"Yes, just as you see him," was the answer; "and he's a good boy, too."

My mind reverted to a clause in the Polynesian Act which forbids the recruiting of the deaf and dumb, and prohibits also their landing in Queensland, where every Kanaka is supposed to undergo Government medical inspection at the port of arrival. I wondered if the very early exemplification of how the law may be violated was only a remarkable accident or was fairly symptomatic of the whole system. I am afraid that subsequent experience gave more strength to the latter theory than to the former. What is called medical inspection must in some instances, at least, be a mere farce. One cannot help suspecting that behind it there may be something worse than farce.

#### THE WORK OF TRASHING.

In that field at Mr Bennie's farm about a dozen boys were engaged trashing. The man who trashes has to tear away the clinging leaves and remove the fallen ones, so that all parts of the growing cane may be opened to the fructifying influence of the sun. I watched those Kanakas at Bennie's, and was readily brought to the admission that they are singularly adapted to the disagreeable conditions. It was hard for the visitors as mere observers to breathe in that atmosphere, but these men wrought in it, with remarkable energy and capacity. It is absurd to suppose that they did not find it hard work, but they did not look more distressed than any men do who have to undergo physical exertion in a very hot place.

Under their hands the field assumed a quite different appearance, for the dead leaves being plucked from the cane and the trash piled between the rows of plants, the suggestion of mere jungle is materially modified. Indeed, the difference between the trashed field and the untrashed field is so marked that after a single experience it is easy to perceive it. There is a variety of opinion amongst sugar-growers as to the need and effect of trashing, and as to the degree and frequency of trashing, if it be really necessary. But for the moment considering not any of these things, but the quite distinct question of whether white men can do such work, let me say that the experience at Bennie's made me very doubtful.

Off-hand, I was disposed to say then, as I stood and gasped and perspired in that cane-field, and watched the toiling blacks, that whites could not do it. Since then I have done some trashing myself, and no longer hesitate to answer the question of capacity. There are whites who can and whites who can't do it; there are whites who can and won't do it. Personally, I pity the white who has to tackle anything so disagreeable. But if every Kanaka were sent back to his island home next week, and a decent wage could be got at trashing cane—that is to say, wage reasonably commensurate with the discomfort—whites would do the work. The whole economic question involved is not disposed of in that statement. For the moment, recollect, I am replying solely to the oft-raised question of capacity. As I emerged, dripping with perspiration, from that immense stewpan, and welcomed once more the sweet, fresh air, I hardly thought what I now believe. It is so easy to be deceived by an insufficient experience. Of course, that remark may be used against the acceptance of my present view, and is entitled to have all the force that legitimately belongs to it.

#### THEY LIVE IN HUTS.

Mr Bennie employs, on an average, about 30 Kanakas, but had only 12 in his service on the occasion of my visit. He reckons that a boy is required for every 10 acres under cultivation, and is strong in his belief that the Kanaka is essential to the success of the sugar industry. He speaks from a large experience in saying that, quite apart from the capacity of a white man to do the field work—having particularly in mind trashing and cutting—the white labor available in the Cairns district is insufficient in quantity, and wanting in that characteristic of "reliability," of which we hear so much.

The planter was good enough to let me see for myself the conditions under which his Kanakas are housed and fed. The housing is provided in huts built of reeds, in which the men herd together—"like so many brutes," my travelling companion remarked. The remark was true enough, but still it was not greatly unlike the way I have seen soldiers herded together, not very much unlike the fashion that I have seen shearers live. The boys are said to prefer these straw huts to any other class of building. There is a plat-



form raised in each, a few feet from the ground. On this the men sleep side by side, their only bedding being a blanket. I have seen much more comfortable Kaffir kraals in South Africa. On the other hand, I have seen Kaffir kraals less comfortable, and the huts of the Kanakas were clean and wholesome to the eye and nostril. Some of the men have a few articles of clothing to the good, and some affect ornamentation when they take their walks abroad.

#### A PHYSICO-MORAL PHASE.

"You have twelve men here, Mr Bennie; how many women?" I asked.

"Only one," was the reply.

"Married?"

"Yes, and they are very faithful, these Marys, to their own husbands."

"Is there not some traffic in wives?"

"Yes; a boy will buy another's Mary for, generally, about L5."

"And the bargain once made is respected?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you usually employ many women?"

"No; I don't care about them. They lead to quarrels through the boys rushing the Marys in the field."

"Rushing!"

"Yes; particularly when the boys are of different tribes."

The word is not unknown in the stock yard, and the planter apparently saw no significance in my somewhat natural exclamation. Somewhat varied travels had to be extended to Queensland before I heard that word employed in respect to human beings.

"But you have some thirty boys at work usually?"

"Yes."

"And your neighbors employ Kanakas?"

"Yes."

"In fact, it is said that there are about 600 Kanakas in this district?"

"I don't know the number."

"There are very few Kanaka women!"

"I know there are not many."

"The women, you say, are faithful to their own husbands—that is, their husbands for the time being?"

"Yes; they are very faithful."

I hesitated about the next question, but my business was to get information, therefore I put it plainly.

"How do the other men get on?"

"Oh, I hardly know."

"They are not all celibates, are they?"

"I don't suppose they are."

"It is not pretended, then, that Polyynesians are a celibate race?"

The planter laughed, and I did not pursue the subject. I had other opportunities later on.

#### HOW THE BOYS ARE FED.

The evening meal was in course of preparation by the Kanaka cook, while we were inspecting the men's quarters, and it was by no means a bad meal. A stew was simmering in an iron pot, rice was being cooked in another, and a third held the hot water intended for the boys' tea. Some vegetables of the pumpkin family lay on a bench, and these, I understood, were also intended for the evening meal.

"I believe in feeding them well, and making them contented," said the planter. "They have the same beef as we have ourselves, and they get as much as they want, although I won't allow waste."

"You do not limit them to the statutory ration?"

"No. I give them all they want. Apart from every other consideration, it pays to feed the boys well, and I always do it. None of my boys complain."

"What do you give them?"

"Meat, sweet potatoes (which I grow myself), rice, bread, vegetables, and tea at every meal."

Certainly the boys I had seen in the field did not appear to be starved, while the cook looked very comfortable—as is the wont of cooks who know their business. I should never think of wasting pity on a cook who was fool enough to allow himself to starve.

#### A RELIGIOUS COOK.

The cook at Mr Bennie's showed us his own quarters, and Mr Draper elicited that he had been several years "along Queensland." Draper happened upon a Bible and hymn-book, and it appeared that the cook was of a serious turn of mind—a fact in which my companion, Mr Mauger, became greatly interested. He attended a church, said his prayers, and sang hymns, therefore, that Kanaka may be claimed as a shining example by those who justify the traffic in human beings on the curious and by no means solid ground that it is a good thing to bring Polyynesians to Queensland because of the acci-



dental Christianising involved. There are experienced missionaries who hold that the said Christianising is done more effectively in the men's island homes. Be these things as they may, the cook at Bennie's illustrates the softening influence of religion upon the savage character.

#### MR. BENNIE'S OPINION.

Mr Draper provided a little chaff at the expense of the planter, who, I gathered, was not necessarily at all times so obtrusively pious as his Kanaka, but that he is a good and kind master, much liked by his men, is beyond all doubt.

"Suppose you find them disobedient, what do you do?" I asked.

"Oh, I manage them all right," was the reply. "I have to boss them a bit sometimes, but that's all."

"No whip or anything of that kind?"

The planter laughed as he answered, "Oh, dear no; there is nothing of that kind."

"And do you find they give good service?"

"Yes, I do, and they are very loyal to their own employer. Unlike Coolies, who are often thieves, the Kanakas will respect your property. A boy may help himself to somebody else's, but he won't rob his own master, and in money matters you may depend upon him. For instance, the law does not recognise any advances we make, but, still, if a boy comes to me and wants money I may let him have it, and at the squaring up in the presence of the inspector there is no repudiation."

"And you think, Mr Bennie, that the work is not such as whites would do?"

"I think that the sugar industry is, under present conditions, dependent upon the labor we have, and unless there is an assurance of labor as reliable to take its place, well, it is no use our trying to grow sugar."

That is the conclusion of an experienced man and one whom I have every reason to regard as an honest man and a witness of truth. Nor do I, even in the strength of my own strong conviction that a White Australia is essential to our national life, find much reason to quarrel with that conclusion. There is such saving force in these words "under present conditions." When the Kanaka goes I venture to think that the

incidence of tariff will have appreciably altered the conditions under which his continuance is deemed to be necessary.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### THE CAIRNS DISTRICT.

The most extensive sugar property in the Cairns district is the Hambleton plantation. This belongs to the Colonial Sugar Company, and is situated about nine miles south of the town. A magnificent estate this. It was originally a field of Melbourne enterprise, as it was first held by the late Mr Swallow (of Swallow and Ariell), who once figured largely in the sugar-growing projects of the north. Hambleton consists of about 5000 acres of good sugar land, and some of it has been let to farmers on leases giving rights of purchase. The Colonial Sugar Company does all things in first-rate fashion, and I regret that time did not permit of my visiting its mill at Hambleton. This is said to be one of the best in Queensland, and has a capacity for turning out about 7000 tons of sugar during the crushing season—the last six months of the year. About fifty farmers are established on the Hambleton lands, and supply the mill with cane. All these men employ Kanakas. The Sugar Company acts as general agent for them in arranging for importations and keeping up the supplies. A certain amount of white labor is employed in the mill itself, but I am informed that Japs and Chinese form a large proportion of the "hands," for the law which confines the Kanaka to field work imposes no such restriction upon other colored aliens.

#### THE MULGRAVE ENTERPRISE.

Rivalling in importance the Hambleton mill is that established by the sugar-growers at the Mulgrave settlement, sixteen miles from Cairns. The first mill in the locality was the outcome of Melbourne enterprise, and some well-known citizens were concerned in it. For a number of seasons it did well, and there are those who attribute an ultimate breakdown to the effects of the Act prohibiting Kanakas, which came into force at the beginning of 1891. The sugar land of the district has been broken up into farms since then, and no fewer than fifty-four comparatively small holders



are associated with the enterprise known as the Mulgrave Central Mill. This is owned by a co-operative organisation, each member of which has mortgaged his land to the Government of Queensland and thus made it possible to jointly secure three State loans, now representing an aggregate sum of L56,000. This has been spent on a first-class crushing mill—a lien over which is part of the Government security—and in the construction of tramways. These latter form a large and important feature of the arrangements made in the cane-fields of Queensland, and enormous sums of money are invested in them. For every sugar-field is in tramway communication with the mill to which it supplies cane, and the mill itself is in like communication with the shipping port. Ordinary carting in these soft-soiled and always "moist" districts is quite out of the question, and the narrow-gauge railway—for such the so-called tramway is—serves great purposes, and is amazingly extensive.

It is noteworthy that although the Mulgrave co-operation has so largely availed itself of Government money, it is regularly paying interest, providing a sinking fund, and assuring to the growers who form the co-operation the best price for their product. For it is a company in which any dividend available is represented by sixpence or a shilling per ton added to the price of the co-operators' cane when they sell at their own mill. Last season the growers got the best price going in the district, and their directors, after handling 46,000 tons of cane, were able to meet all engagements, including the interest charges and provision for redemption, and yet show a profit of L5800. This is what can be done by co-operative effort, involving the cultivation last year of only about 2300 acres, although the land mortgaged to the Government would be about 4000 acres. An interesting and instructive social-industrial experiment, which seems to be working out all right, and as the farmers do fairly well out of the sale of their cane, incidentally shows that the labor "margin," as the term runs, is broad enough to encourage those who believe in a White Australia with tariff protection to the sugar-growers.

#### HOW THE WORK IS DONE.

All these Mulgrave farmers, without any exception so far as I could ascertain,

employ Kanakas, and the great majority of them are anxious to retain the right of continuing to employ them. With them it is a matter of business, a matter of arithmetic. The white man represents to them labor of appalling costliness. Not only the white man, but also every man, except the Kanaka. For instance, it is said that cutting and loading cane, where done by Chinese, Coolies, and Kanakas last season, cost 2s 4d a ton. Precisely the same work done by Kanakas only is said to have been executed for a penny under 2s a ton. Now, recollect that fivepence a ton of cane means, on an average, about 8s an acre, or L80 in a season to the cultivator of 200 acres of sugar land, and you will understand the farmers' point of view in this not very recondite matter.

During the six months constituting the sugar season the Mulgrave Mill employs rather over 100 men, all whites, but it is the exception to have the mill full handed. Anybody who wants a job can get one, for the directors are only too glad to have ten or even twenty more than are actually needed as a reserve against losses by sickness or desertion during the season. I was informed that any reserve secured was always wanted before the season was over. Wages range from 25s to 50s per week, always with rations, in accordance with the class of work done and the capacity of the worker, and in addition a bonus of from 2s 6d to 5s a week is paid to those who see the season through. The bonus is said to have a steadying effect, when the worker is tempted by other employment during the busy season, but, of course, the knowledge that he would forfeit an accrued bonus of a couple of pounds would hardly hold a workman at, say, 40s a week and rations, when work was offering on the wharves at which he could make from L4 to L5 a week.

#### OTHER ENTERPRISES.

Alomba is the third of the important sugar properties in the Cairns district, but my inquiries concerning the mill and the sugar growers there were of too casual a character to form the basis of comment. The main thing ascertained was that the cane is grown by Kanaka labor. The Pyramid Hill plantation represents one of the big district failures. It is about eighteen miles from Cairns, and on this property the expenditure is said to have been no less than L150,000. It was



sugar-cropped for three years, and that is all. The property is now out of use. The causes of failure are not quite apparent, and people disagree on the subject; but it is hardly a failure owing to lack of black labor, for it had taken place before the Commission reported in 1889, and therefore before the prohibition against importation had effect. Its manager described the labor by saying, "We have now 212 Kanakas, about 24 Japanese, and 25 Europeans," and the Commission said of it, "At the Pyramid L130,000 had been invested, and no interest whatever had been received from it. A private individual, and a company who subsequently bought the plantation, have been ruined, and it is now in the hands of mortgagees, who are willing to dispose of it for one fourth of its value, or even less." I met men in the north who pointed to these well-named Pyramid losses as an illustration of the effects of legislation forbidding the Kanakas. They illustrate nothing of the kind. What they do illustrate is something very different, as those who have watched investments and markets perfectly well know.

#### SOME EARLY FAILURES.

Few men of the world need to be reminded that it is not always the pioneer who scores. It was a Chinese who pioneered sugar-growing in the Cairns district. His name is officially given both as Lee On and Andrew Leon, the latter being, apparently, a development of the former, and representing a complimentary adoption by an affluent Chinaman of a favorite Scotch Christian name and a happy combination of Chinese words into a not unknown Jewish surname. Leon, as we had better call him, is one of the pioneers the fruit of whose enterprise fell into other hands. He gave evidence before the Queensland Royal Commission, and I extract from it as follows:—

How long have you been in the district? Since 1875.

Have you taken up any selection? I was the first—the pioneer—to do so.

Whereabouts is your selection? Three miles from Cairns.

Is it what is known as Hop Wah's plantation? Yes.

How many acres did you cultivate? We cultivated between 300 and 400 acres.

Did you grow sugar cane? At first we started cotton, and then we found that was rather expensive, the labor taking all the profits. Then sugar came in, and we communicated with a

friend in Honolulu, who advised us to try sugar. Then we started sugar. At first it was very expensive, the labor especially; still we went on very well for the first season. The cane grew very well, but the crop did not turn out well at all.

What labor did you employ? At first Chinese labor.

And how did you pay them? Well, we paid them from L40 to L60 a year according to the class of labor.

Did you give them rations? Yes, everything.

Did the plantation pay? No.

What did you do? We had to give it up.

You sold it? Yes.

Did you lose much money in the speculation? We expended about L45,000, and then we sold the land for L15,000, and the machines and everything else included for L16,000, giving a loss of L29,000.

#### HOW THE BUYERS FARED.

It is not an unusual thing for Chinese in the North of Australia to talk in big figures. Now, as Mr Leon was able to sell, the fact pre-supposes a buyer. But it often needs a combination of whites to achieve a command of even moderate capital, and in this instance the necessity arose. How the buying partnership fared the Commission heard from Mr W. D. Hobson, merchant, of Cairns. Answering the chairman (Mr Groom) he said:—

In the matter of sugar, Draper, who was my partner, and M'Knight bought the Hop Wah Plantation, horses, drays, and everything in going condition. Our chief reason for buying it was that I was persuaded by some men who were out of employment that they could supply me with good field labor at the rate of 3s 6d a ton to cut the cane and deliver it at the mill, using my horses and drays. I employed four or five gangs of men, overseered by a man with experience on the Clarence River. Those were all white men. I was advertising my business by employing white men on a sugar plantation. In three days they all refused to work, excepting one. They offered to return the rations I had supplied them with. This left me in a hole, having signed the contract with Lee On. I offered them 6d a ton more. This was a price we could not afford to pay, and it is more than any plantation can pay. I even offered them better terms, but they said it was ridiculous, that I had treated them well in not taking their rations back, only not paying them for what they had done, and added that they could not do it at any price. They offered to do it for 4s a ton if I allowed them to cut it eight inches from the ground. I wrote to the manager on the subject, and he replied that the proposal was ridiculous, as nearly all the sugar was in the last eight inches. I had not sufficient labor, and we had to put the mill hands on cutting cane, without keeping the mill going. I lost L1495, besides interest.



By Mr King: I understand that you bought the crop growing? Yes, ready for crushing, all the machinery, horses, drays and everything.

How many acres? Between 700 and 800 acres.

And you lost L1495 on the transaction? Yes. The one man who did not refuse to continue to carry out his contract is in this district now, and you can get his evidence. His name is Ned Barnard. He attempted to carry out his contract and got men to help him. They were to get L4 10s an acre, and 10s was to be allowed extra when the manager was satisfied that the cane was extra heavy. Some of the cane was very heavy, and they got L5 an acre for it. He allowed us out of that 35s a week for the use of two drays and four horses.

By Mr Cowley: Did you say that white men refused to cut and load cane at 4s a ton? They refused at any price. They said they would not take it at any price.

About what was the weight of cane per acre? It averaged about twenty tons, one patch gave fifty tons.

What price per ton did you pay for this cane when buying it from Hop Wah and Co? We paid for the right of cutting the cane and the use of their horses and drays L400.

And yet at that price you lost L1500? Yes, and interest accumulating.

How much sugar did you make?—I could not tell you.

Did you crush all the cane? No.

What eventually became of the cane? It was wasted.

By the Chairman: Did any of you know anything about sugar? Yes, our manager did. He had been in sugar all his life, and he was a partner and a very competent man. He had been with the Pyramid Company.

Had he any risk in the adventure? He lost L250—his all, everything he had.

Did this in your opinion arise entirely from want of suitable labor to reap the crops? If we had had labor to cut our crops in the field we would have cleared at least L2000.

Was the machinery of a good description? Yes.

Had you a vacuum pan? Yes.

Was the sugar of good quality? Yes; I sold the sugar at from L19 to L24 a ton, which was a good profit.

Had you two sets of rollers or one? One set. I used to average a very good price in Melbourne. I sold No. 1 white sugar at L24 a ton.

By Mr King: To what cause do you attribute your failure? In regard to sugar there is no doubt about it that it was the want of labor to cut the cane. Sugar cannot be cultivated without black labor. We find that as soon as a white laborer gets a month's pay he does not think the work good enough, and he wants to leave the district.

What would you suggest as a remedy, which would enable tropical agriculture to be carried on successfully? Until such time as we can plough the ground it will be absolutely necessary that we have an abundant supply of cheap

and reliable labor. Every man with intelligence will see the correctness of this. White men will not work with the hoe.

#### A TENTATIVE NECESSITY.

Not even the most pronounced Kanakaphile will find any stronger evidence on his side of the current question than the above represents. Here is a storekeeper persuaded by white men, who want to do the work, embarking in an undertaking, and keenly conscious that it was a good advertisement for him in his business that he employed whites in the sugar-field. The outcome is downright failure and loss, and yet what do we find him saying, in almost the final words of his evidence—"Until such time as we can plough the ground it will be absolutely necessary, etc." In other words, the Kanaka is "absolutely necessary," but only, apparently, "until such time as we can plough the ground." Nearly twelve years have elapsed since then, and, in respect to a very large area of the Cairns district the time at which the ground may be ploughed has long since been reached.

It will be noticed that Mr Hobson referred to the fact that the work at Hop Wah was done under the direction of an experienced overseer from the Clarence River. Let me say here that the contract system is successfully used on the sugar fields of the Clarence and Richmond rivers, New South Wales. Generally about 2s 6d per ton, with rations, is paid for taking the growing cane off and putting it into river punts. This means (1) cutting, (2) loading on the trucks, (3) pushing the loaded trucks on a tramway distances up to about half a mile to the river bank, (4) tipping the cane from the trucks into punts. In the course of a fairly long day a gang will handle what amounts to about 4 tons of cane per man, or perhaps a little more, therefore the wage earned is from 10s to 12s a day, with rations. It is hard-earned money, but what the worker calls "good" money and white men earn it. For cutting and trucking the New South Wales price is about 1s 9d per ton.

#### PLANTERS' EXPENSES.

Now, let me narrate some of the experiences of planters, as I heard them from the lips of employers concerned. It is proper to clearly keep in mind that as the workmen concerned are long since distributed all over the country, their



version of the several affairs was beyond my reach. I do not say this by way of suggesting that the stories should not be believed. It seemed to me that I spoke to truthful men, but yet plainly to men strongly in favor of retaining the Kanakas, therefore, that far affected by bias. In their minds, and as the outcome of some unfortunate experiences, the tendency is to exaggerate the difficulties incidental to white labor, and, in view of certain indisputable advantages to their own pockets which the retention of Kanakas must mean, to regard a great national question purely from a personal standpoint. The "personal equation" that Herbert Spencer talks about must be a very important factor in the considerations of men who are virtually invited to say whether they would prefer small profits or larger ones, or, if the figure be preferred, whether they would incur the risk of failure with white labor in preference to an assurance of success with Kanakas. Now for some of the experiences.

In response to the advertisement of the Mulgrave Mill directors, about three years ago three Italians took a contract to cut and load cane for 3s a ton. They were to do the work with white labor only, and as a fact the contractors engaged a party of their own countrymen for the job. The terms were 25s a week and cooked rations. The men started in great heart and spirits, and stuck to the work for over a week, the weather during that period being dry. Then came showery days and with them the greater demands upon human endurance which alternately wet and steamy atmosphere with a very high temperature involve. They stood it for a few days, but ultimately refused to go on. The directors urged them to continue and offered help, representing that if they did not continue the mill would be idle, but the Italians had had enough, and refused to proceed. They gave a week's notice, struggled through the time, and cleared out. A few persistent spirits remained with the contractors a little longer, but ultimately the contract was abandoned. The work was finished by a mixed band of aliens, mostly Chinese.

At the Hop Wah plantation the management made what is regarded as a sort of "sporting" offer—i.e., to pay 4s a ton for cutting only. The loading was provided for independently. It is reckoned that a man should cut about

three tons a day if somebody else does the loading, therefore the offer was held to be tantamount to 12s a day to a fairly good man. Europeans tackled it, but with the customary result. The arrangement lasted a month, and during that period there were three complete changes in the personnel of the workers, few only getting into the third week, and not one holding on till the fourth. At the end of the month the whites confessed defeat and the Hop Wah management finished the season with Chinese.

An interesting effort was made at what is known as Blackwell's, a few years ago. Twelve farmers clubbed together and decided to cut their own cane by co-operative effort. They worked well for two or three days, but at the end of a week they found that the work was so exhausting that they could not continue. In their cases it does not appear to have been so much the actual cutting as the loading which wore the men out. The work was finished by colored laborers.

Here is an experience of the "cheque-book farmer." He took up a block of scrub land in the district and decided to prepare it for sugar growing. He let the work by tender to Chinese and kept a careful account of what the several operations cost before the plant cane was ready to cut. These operations include felling the timber, burning off, heaping the rubbish, holing, planting, weeding and trashing. It stood him in as nearly as possible L11 5s an acre—done with Chinese labor. It is considered a fair thing to reckon that with such labor the cost is about L11 an acre in order to produce cane fit to cut.

The Mulgrave Mill Co-operation professes a desire to see white labor get a preference at all times. "We have been helped by the Government," said one member of the company to me, "and we wish to work as much as we can in accord with what we know the wishes of the Government to be. For this reason we employ whites only at the mill itself, although at the Hambledon Mill (Colonial Sugar Co.'s) Japs and other aliens are largely employed." A further expression of this white labor policy was given in the seasons 1898 and 1899, when the directors advertised throughout Queensland an invitation to white men to undertake the cutting of 30,000 tons of cane in lots to suit workers. The price named was 3s per ton. There were no offers.



## LAND IN WAITING.

A very large area of good land in the Cairns district has as yet been only superficially cultivated. The Chinese have cleared much of it, and put in light crops of bananas, in the growing of which they are adepts. Much of the land is ready for sugar. It is estimated by local people that from 6000 to 7000 acres have been cleared, and is now serving minor purposes, (1) because there is a doubt about labor in the minds of those who would apply it to sugar, and (2) because there is neither sugar mill in the locality nor present communication with a sugar mill. Once the Kanaka question is settled by Federal legislation I expect to see the whole of that land applied to its most profitable purpose—sugar-growing. On the other hand, I am invited to believe that unless the settlement be in accord with the pro-Kanaka view all the land now employed in growing sugar will be abandoned. I am afraid that my credulity is not sufficiently developed to make the acceptance of that idea possible.

## CHAPTER X.

### A MOSSMAN PLANTER — CAIRNS MAN'S SET OFF.

While at Cairns I was fortunate enough to meet a man whom I knew in another walk of life, some fifteen years ago. He is a native of this State, and, in the days of his callow manhood he and I slogged together at a little suburban paper, which yielded us a by no means sumptuous living. I hope the present-day prosperous sugar planter, married man with a large family, and, although not rich, with a very nice "stake in the country," will forgive my recalling those bye-gone days. His home is on the Mossman River, away to the north, and as I could not give myself time to go there, his presence at Cairns was a god-send. If I recollect aright, he told me that he usually employed nearly a score of Kanakas. But let him speak for himself.

### A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

"My experience," he said, "is that white men won't stick at the work like the colored race. It's too trying. Even the horses can't stand the severe atmos-

pheric conditions. In the fields, ploughing and cultivating, we can only work the animals five or six hours a day. I tried growing cane with white labor, but had to give it up, because the labor was not obtainable when required."

"But supposing you could have got the labor?"

"Well, from what I know of it, it would have proved too expensive. The heat is very humid along the river flats where the cane-fields are, and you would have to offer great inducements to get white labor.

"Then, again, look at the distance we are away from any of the large centres. Seventeen years ago the settlers of this district were offered by Sir Samuel Griffith, then Premier of Queensland, a central mill on condition that they should grow cane with white labor. They could not take advantage of the offer, and the consequence was that the country lay idle for years and a number of properties were abandoned. White labor was tried in other districts, but it was found utterly impossible to make a success of it. In 1893 the restrictions were withdrawn, and shortly afterwards cane-growing with colored labor was established on a firm basis and has flourished since.

"In 1895 a number of us on the Mossman formed ourselves into a co-operative company. A mill was erected, and tram-lines laid at a total cost of £80,000. Of this, £76,000 was advanced by the Government. Our first season, 1897, produced 2700 tons of sugar, worth about £9 per ton, making a total of £24,300. The output increased as time went on, and last year it was 6000 tons, worth about £60,000."

### THE LABOR EMPLOYED.

"And you all employ Kanaka labor?"

"Not all Kanakas. We also have numbers of Japanese and Indians. I suppose there are altogether about 380 of the colored race employed by the planters of the district, and for the most part of the year they are fully employed. When I went there in 1895 the place was at a standstill. Practically no cane at all was being grown, and there was only one white child on the river. As showing how we have progressed since then, by being allowed to employ colored labor, we now have a fairly large white population and a State school, which is attended by about seventy white children.



and the mill is being supplied with cane by seventy European growers. Most of the latter are shareholders in the mill, but it has never yet been supplied with sufficient cane to keep it working throughout the whole season, notwithstanding that the planters have been prepared to engage any labor offering. The time lost last season amounted to 700 hours, and this represents a monetary loss of L2000 to the company. There is more land in the district waiting to be taken up, and the mill, with slight additions, would be capable of making from 10,000 to 12,000 tons of sugar more in the season. It takes  $8\frac{1}{4}$  tons of cane to make one ton of sugar, and the Mossman growers received last year 13s 9d per ton for their cane. This was, I think, the highest price paid by any central mill in Queensland."

"What do you reckon the colored labor cost?"

"Recruiting and paying for the return of the boys to the islands cost the planter L30 for each recruit. Then we pay them L6 per year, and supply their every want to such an extent that they are able to bank two-thirds of their wages. I have seen them do it. A great many of the boys recruited have been to Queensland before, some having been to their island and back again on two or three occasions. After the boys have served their three years, they are at liberty to go back to their island, but if they remain they get from 10s to 12s per week, and rations. Hundreds do remain. I have a boy with me who has been in Queensland for seventeen years.

"Boys who have served their time are undoubtedly more profitable than the new chums, notwithstanding their higher rate of pay. If the Federal Parliament fixes a time limit, after which recruiting will be stopped, it will be a great mistake to think that the growers will bring over thousands of them before the period expires. No one will employ a recruit when he can get an old boy. The Kanakas, as you know, are employed all the year round. Right through the slack season, as well as the busy, they are paid at the same rate. It makes no difference if they fall ill. On the whole, I think their remuneration is equal to the average wage paid to farm laborers in Victoria."

## THE OTHER SIDE—IN PRACTICAL LANGUAGE.

The foregoing interview furnishes some interesting food for thought, and my old friend will, I suppose, attribute the fact that some of us may, on the same data, arrive at conclusions different from his to the mere bigotry of the southerner. Now, just by way of setting-off his view, and those of the planters whose experiences I gave last week, let me now, in this impartial series of statements, present the other side, as put by a Cairns man with whom I talked.

"You must always recollect," he said, "that this is an out-of-the-way sort of place, and that it is not easily get-at-able. If it were otherwise, or, since we cannot well recast the continent, if travelling were easier and less expensive, we could draw upon the southern cities for the additional labor needed in the busy sugar season, and things would be different. Do not believe half you hear about white men being unable to do the work. Why, the very whites who say it are themselves amongst the hardest workers in the district, and you do not find them delicate looking, do you?"

"No, indeed, they're what the complimentary inspecting officer would declare to be 'a very fine body of men.'"

"Precisely, and they do the hard work."

"But they trash not, neither do they cut cane."

"Not while they can get niggers to do these things for them."

## CHEAP AND NASTY.

"But wouldn't they prefer to give employment to men of their own race. Blood is usually supposed to be thicker than water?"

"Yes, that is a very good and time-honored idea—sometimes true, occasionally false—but since you deal in aphorisms perhaps you have heard one which declares that 'Business is business'."

"The figure does seem somewhat familiar."

"Somewhat! Well, I'll let your modification pass. The point really is that in this workaday world 'business is business' with these planters, and whatever they may pretend to the contrary the Kanaka is cheap—'cheap and nasty', in fact, if we are to have a general parade of hackneyed figures of speech. I know



## CHAPTER XI.

## THE MORAL SIDE—A SHAMEFUL CONFESSION.

the country well, have lived in it for years—for my sins, I suppose—and it is just beastly in the summer months. But most of us, British-like, get about and do our business all the year round, and it is hard work for whites as well as for blacks in the sugar season. I know whites can cut and load cane—I haven't seen any of them trashing—and if they care to stick to it would go through the season. Not, however, when there's anything better on, when there's good work on the wharves, as happens in the sugar season, and men can make L4 or L5 a week, or when a new rush is heard of. For this is a great district for new gold-fields. They're all over the place, and when fellows hear of gold, they drop everything else and go for it. That seems to be inherent in our race, and although it may cause occasional inconvenience to the sugar planter, I don't think that on the whole the flag has suffered by it."

"Hear, hear."

## WORK FOR LABOR DEPARTMENTS.

"There is never the considerable amount of what I may call emergency labor in a place like this that you have near the large centres, and you folks in the south who cry out for a White Australia must do one of two things in getting it. You must either wreck the sugar industry or—what is better, and which you'll probably do—so organise your affairs that the men in the south, who seek vainly for work, will get the fullest advantage of the fact that the north needs labor, instead of that advantage going to dirty Kanakas."

"Have you a scheme?"

"No. I think I see what's wanted, but it is for your Labor department—you've got them in Sydney and Melbourne—to work the thing out. If they can't do that, what in the name of Heaven can they do?"

"Please don't ask conundrums. You think inexperienced southern whites could do the work needed in the cane-fields?"

"I am sure that any decent, steady, intelligent, willing men, not afraid of work, prepared to accept some discomforts because better business is not offering, would quickly accommodate themselves to the conditions. They should then make good wages, and one good white man would do as much as any two greasy Kanakas I ever met in my twenty years of Darkest Queens'land."

In and around Cairns, it is estimated by those who are in a position to speak with knowledge, there are nearly 2000 coloured aliens. These were classified for me as follow:—

Chinese .. . . .	1100
Japanese .. . . .	230
Indians .. . . .	70
Kanakas .. . . .	529

With one exception the totals represent estimates, and nothing more. I have no official data concerning Chinese, Japs. or Indians, and it may be that the numbers are over or under stated. But, owing to the courtesy of the Queensland Department of Immigration, the number of Kanakas may be taken as exact, for the figures are official—have, indeed, at my instance, been supplied in answer to a request by the Prime Minister.

## KANAKAS IN QUEENSLAND.

A full return, specially prepared, signed by the Queensland Immigration Agent, dated 27th June, reached me this week, and the number and distribution of Kanakas in Queensland are given as follow:—

Brisbane .. . . .	209
Beenleigh .. . . .	51
Maryborough....	331
Childers (Isis) .. . . .	891
Bundaberg .. . . .	2274
Rockhampton .. . . .	97
Mackay....	1775
Bowen .. . . .	20
Ayr (Burdekin) .. . . .	600
Townsville .. . . .	79
Ingham (Herbert River) ..	1183
Geraldton (Johnston River)	590
Cairns.. . . .	529
Port Douglas....	335
Thursday Island .. . . .	369

Total .. . . . 9324

Of these, it will be seen, then, Cairns is credited with 529. And the cry is, still they come! I have before me the report of the Mulgrave Central Mill Company Limited, in association with a balance-sheet dated 15th of January, 1901, and read there, "Arrangements have been made for the indenting of 200



boys to arrive in February, 1902, and with this labour secured for three years no trouble is anticipated so far as cutting cane is concerned."

#### STILL THEY COME.

Of course, it may be said that boys now at work will have concluded their term of service, and that some of them will go home. "That," as Corporal Nym hath it, "must be as it may." It is important to recollect that they need not do so, that every man (or boy) of them may re-engage as the law allows, or he may remain in Australia without re-engaging, which the law affects to disallow, but cannot actually prohibit if the Kanaka claim the right of freedom which every human being holds under our flag. It is estimated that of the Kanakas now in the Cairns district not more than a-fourth are indent boys—that is to say, labourers who are serving a first term. Fully three-fourths have made re-engagements—one or several, and some are old-stagers, who hold what are called "exempt" tickets, and do not even nominally come under the deportation regulations. It is thought that there are about 500 "exempt" boys in Queensland—and New South Wales, for the story is that certain of these have got down to the Clarence and Richmond rivers. Consider these things carefully, and it is easy to understand the reality of the Polynesian invasion. It is comparatively easy to get the Kanaka in. To get him out is a very different matter. Meanwhile, one company in the Cairns district has, we see, arranged for 200 fresh boys to arrive next February. Depend upon it, other companies and individuals are not idle.

#### A QUESTION ANSWERED.

My readers will recollect that when, at Mr Bennie's farm, I put a question which the circumstances demanded in a very plain and direct fashion, and that the answer was not illuminating. Later on I got a good suggestion of what the answer really is. There are probably not more than 150—certainly less than 200—women included in the total of colored aliens mentioned above, and of the women about 30 or 40 are Japanese prostitutes. Nearly all are located in Cairns itself, and there are also some abandoned white women in that insalubrious little town of, say, 3000 souls. Not

so long ago, some part of Cairns awakened to the fact that it was not quite a creditable thing to permit a horde of Japanese prostitutes to openly ply their shameful calling in a British town. Amongst "smart business men" and the like, who manage affairs, and do not stop to worry their heads over that which ranks under the denomination of public morals, a few persons, evidently imbued with some old-fashioned ideas still much prized by the race to which we belong, tried to assert inconvenient and quite unbusinesslike principles. The local municipal body was approached by petition, and asked to suppress the Japanese brothels. The people of Cairns do not forget the excitement which this awakening and surprising movement caused in their midst, nor what remarkable factors operated to produce the division of opinion caused by the attack upon this particular "vested interest" of the North. It were easy for me to here impute the worst motives to the men who made up their minds to oppose the town-cleaning project. It is always easy to be unjust. My purpose, however, in these articles, is to state what I honestly believe to be the truth, regardless of persons, and the truth is that those who from mere mercenary self-interest resisted the effort to improve the public morality of Cairns are a quite insignificant few. Yet the fact remains that the petitioners failed, and the local council, on the casting vote of the chairman, decided to retain the Japanese prostitutes. Upon what ground! Simply and solely on the ground that, having regard to the number of Kanakas and other colored aliens in the district, as a measure of public safety the Jap. women could not be spared!

#### NEW PHASE.

Those who took part in the opposition to the petition do not hesitate to state quite frankly how they felt, and why they acted.

"We knew," said a prominent one of them to me, "that if we sent these women away, our own wives and daughters would not be safe. We considered it primarily necessary to safeguard our own womenkind from the probabilities of outrage; for, however necessary the Kanaka is to sugar-growing, and I think he is essential, after all he is a mere savage, and as you have been told he'll



sometimes 'rush' a Mary in the field. I need hardly assure you that I would be glad to see every prostitute banished from the town, but we all recognised that while such women are here they serve a purpose, and that incidentally our own women are saved from a real and serious peril; therefore, we had to do what we regarded as expedient under the circumstances, and if you were in our place you'd do the same, would you not—straight now?"

This was the argumentum ad hominem, with a vengeance, and my answer is quite unimportant. Further conversation elicited, however, that the dread entertained by my Cairns acquaintance was almost wholly a dread of the Kanaka, not of the male Jap, of the Chinese or of the Indian. It also elicited that what is happening in the United States, and is there the main cause of merciless lynchings, is happening also in Queensland, where women of our own race are to be found surrendering themselves to Polynesians.

#### CHARLES POWER'S DENUNCIATION.

Before Mr Charles Powers followed the lead of some more distinguished public men, and affected the belief that the Queensland sugar industry could not be carried on without black labor, he delivered a notable speech, in which he asked: "Is the social and material status of the community lowered by the introduction of servile labor?" His answer is apposite here. "Those who read history," he declared, "will at once say yes; but, unfortunately, the employer either does not read history, or does not take to heart its lessons. Poverty and despair that is bred by long-continued poverty lead at last to callousness, and the extinguishment even of the desire for better things, and degeneration sets in as courage and hope die. More young girls have been driven to prostitution by poverty than by evil desires, and it is sad to think that our white population is now providing prostitutes for our Kanaka population. The planters who introduced the traffic would be horrified with this phase of the traffic if their class had to supply these for their Kanaka employes. Is it such a little thing that the girls of the white workers—the children of the poor—are the victims of the dreadful sacrifice? It is to me a horrible thought that one single child growing up in our State

schools should be destined for such a fate; but then we rarely bring the black women from the islands with the men. A planter to whom I lately mentioned this objection, said, 'Oh, yes, but if there were no white prostitutes, then none of our women would be safe.' Just so, but it is somewhat shocking that a Christian community should regard such depravity with complacency." Note the "somewhat." If Mr Powers had said that it was inexpressibly shocking, it seems to me that he would have fairly declared the sentiment of every decent and thoughtful man and woman in Australia.

The language of that speech was recalled to my mind as I heard the reasons for the preservation of the immoral status quo at Cairns.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON THE JOHNSTONE RIVER.

A pleasant trip down coast in the steamer Palmer brings us to the entrance of the Johnstone River. The four miles run to the principal town is past fields of bananas, many of them wholly in the hands of Chinese, and we presently reach picturesque Geraldton, situated on the left bank. It is a bright little town, and the generally useful handbook of the A.U.S.N. Company tells me that "the population numbers 1500 whites and 1400 colored." Probably the Johnstone River district is meant, for Geraldton hardly suggests the presence of so many people. It possesses public buildings, several hotels, and some good stores and a newspaper, and is, one would imagine, a town with a future, considering that the value of its exports exceed £100,000 a year. Geraldton is built on the river slopes, which are dotted with some prettily-situated dwellings, and the place presents an appearance of comfort and cleanliness to which the topographical conditions of Cairns do not lend themselves.

### A WET COUNTRY.

When I say that it had been raining just before I reached Geraldton, the reader will understand that the weather was simply normal. Cairns is wet enough, in all conscience, but Geraldton takes pride of place. In both towns they



calculate the annual rainfall in fathoms. The most complete records I found were those kept at Goondi mill. These show that the average annual fall for ten years, 1891-1900, was no less than 153.28 inches, and that the average number of wet days per year was 173. In 1894 was experienced the greatest rainfall, 241.5 inches, with 209 wet days; the smallest in the decade mentioned was in 1897, for which the figures are 111.99 inches, with 182 wet days. There is no record of any fall less than 106 inches for the year. Compare that and the other figures given, with our experience in Melbourne, where the average rainfall is about 25 inches per year, and you will get an idea of the weather conditions on the Johnstone River. Experience seems to show that the first third of the year is the wettest, the middle third the driest. The rain is most abundant, therefore, at the hottest period of the year, and dwellers in the district live the greater part of their time in just such an atmosphere as one might suppose exists in a simmering stew-pan. It must be very trying, and it is quite wonderful that men and women of our race stand it as well as they do.

#### LARGE LANDHOLDERS.

A large tract of the sugar country on the Johnstone River was originally taken up by the Sisters of Mercy, under the guidance of the late Bishop Quinn, of Brisbane. It was acquired as a speculation, and the Colonial Sugar Company bought extensively from them. The Sisters still retain possession of a good deal, and I was told that there are negotiations in progress with a view of leasing the land to small cultivators. The Hon. E. W. Gray (Quinlan, Gray and Co., Brisbane) was associated with the Bishop in acquiring the first lands for the Sisters of Mercy, and is himself a considerable proprietor. For the first sugar plantation the district is indebted to the enterprise of a Melbourne man, Mr T. H. Fitzgerald, who established Innisfail, one of the successful going concerns of to-day. Apparently, the largest operations are those of the Colonial Sugar Company. Its magnificent estate, of about 5000 acres, is known as Goondi, and its mill is one of the best in the north.

#### LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION.

On landing at Geraldton we were met by Mr Harry Gray, son of the hon G. W. Gray, who manages what is known as the Queensland plantation, the property of the Queensland Sugar Company. There also assembled to bid us welcome a number of farmers, the acquaintance of one of whom we had made on ship-board during the journey north, and I was particularly glad to meet an old "Herald" man—where are they not to be found?—in Mr H. W. Harris, the editor and proprietor of the local "World," and a valuable man of affairs in the prosperous although damp-looking little town. It was too late in the evening to visit any of the sugar fields, but at our hotel we had a pleasant and profitable time talking over the situation, and speculating about "what Barton would really do." Not a man amongst them, from young Mr Gray, prim and dainty, to the smallest farmer—in point of holding, of course—but believed that the Kanaka must be retained if the sugar industry was to continue on the Johnstone River, and I was impressed by the genuineness of the fear entertained that without the Kanaka the industry would perish.

"We must have an assurance of labor if our planting is to be of any value to us," they said, again and again.

It was suggested that suitable arrangements might be made to provide white labor, but the answer was invariable,

"You cannot rely upon it when you get it. If white men come here they are either men who, after putting in a few months for wages will want to get land of their own—which is natural—or they're of the class who go on the spree after the first decent pay-day."

In that belief I found the farmers on the Johnstone: in that belief I left them. And if I were to write columns about my inquiries there it would not express the local public opinion in any other form.

#### ANOTHER MORAL PHASE.

While all of them laid special stress on the labor phase, it was not the only one mentioned. One planter—a man of education—put a moral side that I had not previously seen presented.

"We are not, as professed Christians," he said, "entitled to discriminate against men of color. It is an unworthy and an unrighteous thing to do, for has not the



Almighty made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. These Kanakas are men with immortal souls. Do you tell me that any Christian nation may shut its doors against them and say that they may not be admitted within the pale of civilisation? They come to us savages. We civilize and elevate them."

"Is that your purpose in bringing them here?"

"Admittedly the primary purpose is to get from them labor of a kind for which they are specially adaptable, but the incidental effect is civilising, and elevating, and my point is that we are acting in the face of Scripture in discriminating against them."

"Is there not something in Scripture about certain 'bounds of their habitation' being set?"

"Yes, and these are, you will find, mostly climatic. In this climate the Kanaka has a place."

"Then the white man is the intruder?"

"I do not say that. Each race has its part, and its place, and the spirit of the Scriptural teaching is enough for all else."

Circumstances did not permit of the colloquy being pursued further, but I reproduce the conversation because it embodies a phase of the matter I had not met previously, and I should fail in my business if I wilfully omitted any.

#### RECORD OF SUCCESS.

One hears at Geraldton of what courage, grit and perseverance—aided, I suppose, with a reasonable amount of luck—may do. Three brothers, all practical men in working land, arrived at the Johnstone River not so long ago. Besides their strong arms, stout hearts and useful capital of experience, they brought £20 and some tools. First they worked for wages, giving their labor wherever they could get fair pay. Meanwhile they looked around, got hold of a valuable piece of land, cleared it, planted first bananas, then sugar, and very soon found that they need not continue to seek wages, all their efforts being needed on their own land. As the outcome of three years' work, behold today prosperous men, reputed to be worth about £6000. "Could it have been done without the aid of colored labor?" I was asked, and if I did not venture any

reply it was because the rapid prosperity of these men seemed to present an argument, capable of being used on either side. I heard, too, that "one of the most remarkable men in the district," was Tam Sie, a fabulously wealthy Chinese, who helps his fellow countrymen in the north to virtually control the trade in bananas.

#### THE MEN IN BUSINESS.

It was interesting to learn what manner of men, besides the just occasional farmer, have entered into the sugar-growing business here. Two solicitors, a dentist, a grocer—(amongst the very successful)—an architect, commission agents, all sorts and conditions. Intellectual men, who buy their experience as they go, and who, once experience is acquired, know how to use it to the best advantage. I could not but admire the sturdy spirit which these men exemplify, and I could not but feel in my all too brief association with them what an advantage it is to any place to have so large a degree of culture amongst the hardhanded and rough-clothed planters who have abandoned the "genteel" city occupations to which they were trained, and tackled the virgin forest. That was my feeling when I met them, at a period when my views on the Kanaka question were hardly formed, and I do not think it necessary to change the feeling now, even though I am unable to admit that their standpoint on the great question is a safe or a sound one for United Australia.

These things we hear on the evening of our arrival, when, also, preparations are made for making the most of next day. Mr Harry Gray, his chief clerk Mr Jones, Mr Monkwell, solicitor-planter, and others are anxious that we should see as much as possible during our stay, and no trouble is too great for them. Nothing could exceed the courtesy of Mr Gray, who had already, in expectation of our arrival, made arrangements for our visiting the Colonial Sugar Company's plantations, and whose plans also included a run by train—they call it a tram—to the far-famed picturesque Mourilyan Harbour, but which, as a fact, we were unable to visit as proposed. When I expressed my thanks, Mr Monkwell said, with a fine courtesy, "It is good of you to come all this way to see for yourselves," "and



the obligation is all on our side." We (that is, Mr Mauger and myself) had the pleasant companionship of Mr Chaplin, of the "Brisbane Courier," a former Melbourne pressman, who was making a professional tour through the sugar districts, and whose genial comradeship did not in the least abate because looking upon the same things we saw with different eyes.

#### EARLY MORNING RUN.

At daylight we were astir, at 7 o'clock a special train stopped beside our hotel, and a considerable party started on a run through the banana and cane fields. There were several ladies in the party, and all were keenly interested in the excursion and its general purpose, which was to let the visitors see for themselves the richness of the country, much of which is yet untouched, and in which the "forest devil" and stalwart axe-men will have much work to do before cane may be planted in the fruitful and inviting soil. The morning was moist, but not unpleasant, and we all enjoyed the just a trifle jolty ride. We were on the 2ft. gauge tram-line of the Divisional Board, and in anticipation of the rolling stock yet to come the one carriage in which we all travelled was not of ducal splendour. It was just a sort of roofed-in truck with seats in it, but it served its purpose admirably. Besides the virgin land yet untouched, we saw nice cleared patches and some in process of being cleared, and here and there was a waving field of cane. We passed one planter (Mr Brett), a prosperous man, doing his own ploughing, and were told that good ploughman were scarce. A party of Kanakas busily plucking at rank weeds represented all the black labor we saw on the run.

#### THE CANES GROWN.

There may be "Herald" readers interested in knowing something of the canes grown in this rich district. First, there is the Rose Bamboo, imported from Java, and regarded by the majority of growers as the best all-round. It is cane which, its best friends say, more largely than any other preserves erectness while growing. There are those who hold, however, that the Striped Singapore is a better cane in that particular—an important one, it seems to me, if sugar growing is to be

continued with white labor only. The Meera is a dark purple cane, very rich in sugar, and those who favor it say that this richness is more than a set-off to the comparative lightness of Meera crops. The White Bamboo is a newer cane in the district, and as it grows uprightly, and in both richness and abundance, it is coming into a good deal of favor. Perhaps the remark only exemplifies my ignorance of the technique of sugar-growing, but it appeared to me that upon the character of the cane grown the possibility of production with white labor may in some measure depend, more particularly if trashing be deemed an operation absolutely essential. This, at least, is what I thought as I observed the different degrees of uprightness and density presented by what I understand to be different kinds of cane.

On our returning to Geraldton we made a hasty breakfast, for the horses were saddled and waiting. With Mr Monkwell as my particular companion, and cicerone, I started on horseback for Goondi.

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#### CHAPTER XIII.

A pleasant ride in company with my new and pleasant acquaintances, Mr Markwell and Mr Moodie, small-holding planters, brought us, through much fertile and picturesque country, from Geraldton to Goondi, the Colonial Sugar Company's plantation and mill. On nearing Goondi we stopped to witness some planting operations. In a previous paper I have described what planting is. Here I saw it under fairly typical conditions. A broad field which had borne several crops of cane, and had been "ploughed in," as the local term is, exposed the magnificent richness of the beautifully-furrowed chocolate-colored soil. One may feel that there is richness in a gold mine, dank, damp and dreadful as the place usually is; and one sees in a great diamond quarry, such as I visited at Jagersfontein, South Africa, a glittering dark-blue ribbon of earth which does not look gemful, but which one cannot but recollect is potent in the creation of those kings of the times called millionaires. For me, however, there is nothing so declarative of the bounty and all-wise providence of the great Giver of things as the newly-ploughed field of



fertile land, waiting for the seed, and ready and eager to convert it into a "smiling harvest."

#### NATURE AND ART.

The hills and the valleys, the mountain torrent, and the trickling stream, the forest and the plain, the leaf and the flower, and the warbling of birds and brooks—of all these hath the poet sung. To the influence of all are susceptible the heart and mind of the man to whom the cynical world has left something of the image of his Maker. Is it that I am more practical than picturesque, or that there is a deeper meaning for me in the occult chemistry of the earth than in the revelation of the natural unaided by art, that to me the most attractive features of landscape always are the loving alliance of man and nature represented by the newly ploughed field and, in its season, the golden harvest just ripened, awaiting the reaper, and, moved thereto by the fragrant breeze, seeming to be ever softly chanting a hymn of thanks that the promise of the sowing has been fulfilled? Such reflective self-interrogation, comes to me as I look upon that broad, rich field of dainty crown and furrow and think of the harvest time.

#### KANAKA WOMEN AT WORK.

Put there is work going on away at the other end, and leaving my horse on the roadside I proceed on foot across the soft, yielding soil to a closer investigation. Not until I get well up to them do I perceive that the busy, dark figures are not all as I had supposed, those of men. Here are Kanaka women at work, planting the sugar cane. Pleasant-faced, and not unhappy-looking women. One carries an infant—much as do the Kaffir wives engaged in more laborious work in South Africa. There, however, in a land most of the inhabitants of which are black the sight does not affect one so much as it does in White Australia. The sense of chivalry is instinctively stirred into revolt against the spectacle of a woman at work in the field with a baby to care for. It is no use telling me that hundreds of women with children in their arms do more laborious work in many British households. The fact does not in the least lessen the repugnance at once aroused by the spectacle of an infant-

burdened woman sowing cane in Queensland. Hardly less prominent is my instinctive dislike to seeing any woman at field work. Yet it is not hard labor. On the contrary, children might do it without physical harm, except that which may result from their continuing to work quite irrespective of whether it is wet or dry. As I stood watching, a sharp shower fell, and I was nearly wet through before I reached the partial shelter in a field of growing cane. Meanwhile the Kanakas, men and women, went on with their planting, their rain-soaked garments clinging to them. No wonder is it that so many Kanakas die of lung disease!

#### THE LABOR QUESTION.

The cane used has been previously cut into suitable lengths (each about a foot), and a cart passes up and down the furrows dropping supplies. The business of the planters is simply to pick up the pieces of cane and lay them in the furrows, in a line only broken by short spaces between—in some cases it seemed to me, with no such spaces. That is all. Five women will do about four acres a day at this work. Later on a light harrow is taken over the ground at right angles to the rows of plants, and the levelling of the ground as the crown earth falls over into the furrows completes the planting. Simple, easy, and (save for the rain), comfortable labor. Specially reserved for savages this labor, for men and women from the islands of Polynesia. My heart ached as I thought of the hundreds of men in the southern cities of Australia who had passed the greater part of their lives in shops, factories, or offices, who had been eliminated by machines, or (to them) other adverse fortune, and to whom the world is denying a chance of earning bread. For them the hard, rough work of the navvy is quite unsuitable. As things are reckoned—I do not necessarily subscribe to the system—they are "not worth" the day wages usually paid for such toil; at piece-work payment, let them impose upon their cruelly bruised hands and worn, ill-fed bodies all the strain that brave spirits and hearts anxious about wives and bairns are capable of, and they can hardly earn food. And here in another part of Australia is this pleasant planting work to be done—planting incidental to the production of



a certainly profitable crop, provided only that tariffs and other things are ordered on the lines of that patriotism which pays due and decent regard to the welfare of people of our own race. Here is work which any man could learn to do in five minutes, and at which there ought to be possibilities of earning decent wages. And it is reserved for the Kanaka "boy" and the "Mary," the latter keeping at it even to the days of her advanced pregnancy, and within a few days of delivering her child returning with a babe on her back into the field of labor. Let my countrymen and countrywomen think these things out quietly and dispassionately. I haven't the least doubt about their verdict.

#### AT GOONDI PLANTATION.

Nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy of the folks at Goondi. Take what view you may of the Kanaka question, it would be hard indeed to believe that the black workers would suffer deliberate cruelty from such men as are here in authority. May I not say that truly the Colonial Sugar Company, a model employer, has good reason to be proud of the gentlemen who serve it, with a fidelity which never omits regard for the good name as well as for the pockets of the employer. Mr C. E. Forster is the manager, and his labour overseer is Mr R. S. Andrewes, the descendant of a Bishop. The mill stands on the south side of the North Johnstone River. It is a fine property and crushes cane for an area of over 5000 acres of sugar country, about a fourth of which in each year lies under fallow. This year the machinery will crush the product of nearly 4000 acres. The company has between 50 and 60 tenant farmers, who hold between them four-fifths of the whole area, and who will supply this season cane from 2750 acres for the mill's operations, which, I suppose, have already commenced. Of the land worked by the company itself 600 acres will supply cane. Innisfail cane will come from 350 acres, and Queensland Company's from about 250 acres.

#### EN ROUTE TO A FREEHOLD.

Some of the land included is freehold, and the tenant farmers all hold leases which give the right to purchase, at from L3 to L15, in accordance with the condition of the land when the tenant

enters upon it. Here is an example of the conditions made with a farmer who takes up, say, 100 acres of the company's land. First, there is no charge at all until the land grows cane. Then the tenant pays rent, at the rate of sixpence per ton of cane raised, up to the period at which out of his profits he has cleared off one-fifth of the purchase money. Rent then ceases, and the tenant has to pay 5 per cent. interest upon the balance of the purchase money, which he is expected to find in instalments of one-fifth per year. It is said that due allowance is always made for difficulties or misfortunes, and that in practice the obligations indicated by the agreement can usually be met. Until the last instalment is paid off and the tenant is free he is under an obligation to sell all his produce to the company's mill. There is a fixed and guaranteed price of 12s a ton for cane cut and loaded on the tram truck which conveys it from the field to the mill. The company reserve the right to reject cane unfit for manufacture, its own inspector being the judge. The conditions require that the cane shall be trashed at least once not more than six weeks or less than a fortnight before the time of cutting. In addition to the lease there is a cane contract governing these matters, and in the case of the freeholder a contract of the kind is usually for a term of five years.

#### PRICE OF CANE.

The guaranteed price paid for cane at Goondi, which at present does all the buying in the Johnstone River district, is, I have said, 12s a ton. This, as compared with 11s given by the same company at their Hambledon mill, Cairns, 12s 3d paid by Mulgrave Central Mill, and 13s 9d by the Mossman Central Mill. These varied prices—only a small degree dependent upon difference in the quality of cane—are the cause of heartburnings, as every grower naturally wants to get top-price. He labors under the easily intelligible sense of injustice when for a product of precisely the same value, he is required to accept less money than his neighbor. Where there is a Central Mill—and it is proposed to establish one on the Johnstone—the price should be, and invariably is, the best. For, as I have already described, the term is indicative of a co-operation of growers, who virtually sell to themselves while the transaction is in cane,



which won't keep; and ultimately stand on the same terms as any others when they offer to the buyers of Australia or elsewhere and the transaction is in sugar, which will keep and need not be hurried upon the market. Incidental to this, may I raise a question which need not here be discussed. Would it not be more profitable if the sugar mills were, whenever practicable, put close to the wharves where the raw sugar is shipped? That cannot be always be done, but it did seem to me that, here and there, there was a good deal of waste haulage incidental to the working of some of the present mills, the cane being carried miles inland for crushing, and the sugar brought back over the same miles for shipment. For the fields of sugar cane are kept in communication with the mill by an elaborate system of tramways, of which there can be no less than thirty or forty miles in the Geraldton district. By the way, in those old days when sugar was selling for £36 a ton, and mill-owners are said to have demanded half the planters' product in return for crushing, somebody must have made a lot of money.

#### TREASURES OF EARTH.

Land which has been used in the first instance for bananas is well fertilised by ploughing in the banana herbage, and what is known as the Mauritius bean is also used as a fertiliser. So far not much artificial manuring has been done in the district, which in that respect has a great advantage over some of the southern ones, where the sugar cane needs much coddling. The average yield on the Johnstone river is about 20 tons per acre. The cane has been known to grow so high as to interfere with the working of the telegraph lines. It is here I heard of a sixteenth ratoon crop—i.e., the seventeenth annual product of the original planting—which had paid handsomely at every cutting. Besides sugar, the Johnstone River district produces arrowroot (in connection with which Messrs. Harding Bros. have established a mill), bananas and maize. Its timber includes a good cedar, the silky oak, and the beantree. The export of bananas is stated to be 20,000 bunches a week, and the other leading exports are sugar and timber. Coffee is being tried in the district, but no great triumphs are yet claimed. Amongst the planters'

troubles must be counted a destructive grub, against which continuous war is waged, farmers cheerfully paying 1s an acre per year to supplement a like grant from the Government in order that the work of destruction may be prosecuted. A local board manages the crusade, and pays a shilling a quart for all grubs brought to its headquarters.

#### THE MILL LABOR.

The Goondi Mill is capable of crushing 500 tons of cane per day, by which is meant twenty-four hours, for the season's work, beginning in July, is continuous until all the available cane is crushed; the output would be from 50 to 60 tons of sugar. About 60 men are employed at the mill all the year round. Of these about one third are whites, the remainder are Japanese. The number is increased to 100 in the crushing season, and about one half are whites. As at Cairns, I was told that it was not easy to get white men, while the crushing was in progress.

#### MY BIT OF TRASHING.

In one of the mill fields at Goondi I got my first experience of trashing. It was a mere quarter of an hour's test, and alongside of me an overseer started a gang of stalwart-looking blackfellows whose amazement was profound when they found "this feller boss"—c'est moi!—slogging away in their midst. It was not nice work, and nobody better understood than I did myself how awkwardly I tackled it. The field of cane was dense and wet and hot, and the air was saturated with the heavy odor of rank vegetation. Into this the infusion of decidedly "strong" man brought by the reeking bodies of that gang of sweating Polynesians did not come as a perfume of Araby or anywhere else. I was honestly glad to get out, and although I declined to confess myself vanquished, I did not feel quite normal again until, by the kindness of Mr Andrewes, I came under the stimulating influence of a cup of tea. If ever it is my fortune to have to trash sugar cane in order to win bread for my dear ones, I hope it may be under conditions at least fifty miles removed from the smell of a Kanaka. Ugh! even the memory of it is not entertainable now without



the help of tobacco. Before writing another line I must light my pipe.

### THE CHINESE STAKE—THE BOOT-LESS.

It was interesting on our way back from Goondi to pass through Chinatown, and observe how big a "stake in the country" had been acquired by the natives of the Flowery Land. He has well-appointed stores and a Joss House, and thrives amazingly. It was something of a novelty for me on riding past the Geraldton Public School to see a large class being taught on the verandah, and to find that none of the children, although Europeans, wore boots or socks. In this damp country it is found to be better to let the youngsters go barefooted, as they do often until they are very big boys and girls. Then I am told they suffer a good deal in their effort to get about for the first time in their lives in covered feet.

### IS THE KANAKA CHEAP.

Throughout the whole of this district I have already indicated, the Kanaka is employed. "Yes," said a man to whom I spoke on the subject, "twenty years ago at Mackay the whole of the work in a sugar field was done by white labour, and done well. Personally, I have done pretty well everything that is to be done in North Queensland, and in all sorts of weather. I say unhesitatingly that white men can do the work needed in the sugar fields, but white men won't do it. Keep that in mind. They think it derogatory to do work which they tell you is 'only fit for a damned nigger to do.' I have heard the remark hundreds of times. It is not a case of can't; it is a case of won't, and that's our trouble here."

"What about cheapness?"

"Well, of course, we've always got to meet that. At present prices the industry won't stand dear labour, but I have never thought the Kanaka cheap, all things considered. It would pay me, I think, to pay decent wages while I want him to a white man than to have to keep the Kanaka all the year round."

I remembered what a man had said to me at Cairns on the possible work of Southern Labour Departments, but it was not necessary to pursue the conversation.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### POSITION OF TENANT FARMERS.

For what may be regarded as sufficient reasons, however, I wish to refer particularly at this stage to a phase of the subject which it is essential that the Federal Government should fully and clearly understand before its expected legislative projects are launched. "It seems to me," says a correspondent, "that while your description of the relations between the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and its tenants is fair, so far as it goes, it hardly goes far enough. People should know that the company has the whip hand of its tenants all through." My correspondent is so generally complimentary that it would ill-become me to resent the criticism quoted. Stronger reason still for my not doing so is the fact that I recognise the perfect justice of his observations, so far, at least, as they relate to my condensed description.

The more one thinks on the subject the stronger is the consciousness that these agreements disclose, perhaps better than anything else, the character of the poor man's "vested interest," which the Federal Parliament must safeguard when providing suitable tariff protection to the grower—(1). Because these men are entitled to primary consideration from Australians who wish to encourage a local industry; (2) because the Kanaka labor to which they have been accustomed and encouraged to believe would be continued is to be withdrawn. So that there need not be misunderstanding or controversy in regard to either the tenants' leases or the cane agreements, I propose to let those documents speak for themselves, omitting only mere formal passages and words.

### TERMS OF LEASE.

Here now are the terms of lease as they apply to practically all tenant farmers on the Herbert River:—

The lessors agree to let and the lessee agrees to take all that piece of land more particularly described in the schedule for ten years, at the rental of 6d for each ton of cane sent to the mill, such rental to be retained by the said lessors out of the proceeds of each cane crop, and upon and subject to the covenants and conditions following:—

1. The lessee shall bear all costs connected with the survey of the land.



2. The lessee shall plant and cultivate all the land fit for growing cane, with the exception of that portion mentioned in Clause 3 of this agreement, with sugar cane, which the lessors undertake to purchase on the terms and conditions mentioned in a memorandum of agreement made and entered into in that behalf on the day of the date hereof by and between the parties hereto.

3. The lessee shall have the right to plant and crop upon the land up to 5 per cent. of the total area with crops other than sugar cane.

4. The lessee shall not burn any of the cane trash on the land without the consent of the lessors, and shall, after every three crops of cane have been removed, plant and plough under in proper manner at least one crop of approved green manure, provided the seed for such crop is supplied at cost price by the lessors.

5. The lessee shall keep the land clear of all noxious weeds and grasses, and maintain all buildings, fences, gates, main drains and other permanent improvements that were on the farm when first leased by him, in good order, and shall allow the agents of the lessors to enter the premises at all times for the purpose of inspecting the farm, etc.

6. The lessee shall give to the lessors yearly a lien over the sugar cane crops to be grown by him on the said land, for the purpose of securing to the lessors the due repayment of such advances of money or goods as may hereafter, in the discretion of the lessors, be made by them to the lessee.

7. The lessee shall not sublet or assign the said land or any portion, and shall not erect or permit to be erected thereon any store, public-house, or other business premises, and save as aforesaid, shall not use the land for any other purpose than a sugar plantation without the consent in writing of the lessors.

8. The lessee shall pay all rates and taxes.

9. The lessee, provided he has given notice in writing before 31st December, shall, at the expiration of this lease, have the right to renew the lease for a further term of ten years under the terms mentioned in Clause 12.

10. The lessee shall have the right at any time during the first six years of this lease to purchase from the lessors the land at and for the price or sum of £ , one fifth of which amount shall be paid to the said lessors in cash at the time of such purchase, and the balance by four yearly equal payments, the amount for the time being due to the lessors by the lessee in respect of such purchase money, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, payable yearly when the crop of sugar cane has been cut, but such right of purchase shall not be exercised until the lessee shall have repaid all advances made to him by the lessors, together with the interest due thereon. The lessee shall pay all cost in connection with the transfer of the land. In the event of the death of the lessee before the purchase of the said land is completed, the lessors shall, if requested, refund to the heirs of the lessee all moneys deposited by him on account of the purchase of

the land, in which case, however, all the rights and interest of the heirs of the lessee under this agreement may, at the discretion of the lessors, be determined, and the lessors shall have the right to enter into and resume possession of the land.

11. The lessors hereby agree to place to the credit of the land purchase account of the said lessee sixpence (6d) for each ton of cane delivered to the mill, provided that the terms of the cane agreement to be entered into are faithfully carried out, and when the amount thus credited, together with the deposits made by the lessee shall equal the total sum of purchase money hereinbefore mentioned, the lessors will forthwith transfer the land to the lessee. Should the purchase be completed before the 31st day of December, nineteen hundred and

the lessors hereby agree to continue to pay to the lessee sixpence (6d) per ton more for the cane than the price mentioned in the cane agreement then current from the date of the completion of purchase till the 31st December, nineteen hundred and . Should, however, the lessee fail to make a deposit on account of purchase during the first six years of this lease equal at least to one-fifth of the sum representing the difference between the credits made by the lessors and the total purchase price mentioned in Clause 10, the lessors may withdraw the amount placed by them to the credit of the lessee's land purchase account, and discontinue crediting further sums thereto.

12. Should the lessee fail to make a deposit on account of purchase within the above stated time, the lessors, in the event of the lessee wishing to renew the lease for a further term, reserve to themselves the right to raise the amount of the rent and purchase money, but the terms of payment and conditions of lease shall in other respects remain as herein mentioned.

13. The lessors shall, if required, make advances to the lessee on account of permanent improvements made by him on the said land in the way of clearing, grubbing, draining, etc., such advances not to exceed per cent. of the value of the work done, which value shall be fixed by the lessors or whom they may appoint, and provided always that the work shall be done with the approval and to the satisfaction of the lessors. All such advances shall bear interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum, payable annually out of the proceeds of the crop and shall be repaid in three equal instalments out of the proceeds of the first three crops of cane. In the event of the lessors providing the lessee with tools (and, or) iron for building, ten per cent. of the value of such tools (and, or) iron shall be paid by the lessee in cash and the balance out of the proceeds of the first crop of cane.

14. The lessors reserve the right at any time during the first ten years after the signing of this agreement to cut out from the land herein leased, and resume possession of any area they may require for roads and for the laying down of permanent tramways on paying the lessee, if



he has purchased the land, the same amount per acre at which the land was bought, together with fair compensation for any crops that may be growing on the land or permanent improvements that may be interfered with by the resumption of the area to be resumed.

15. The lessors reserve the right to enter on the said land at any time and cut and remove any timber growing thereon, and the lessee shall have the right to cut and use only such timber as he may require for house building, fuel and other personal uses, and shall not cut any other growing timber without the permission in writing of the lessors being first obtained.

10. The lessors shall have the right of determining this agreement and of re-entry in the event of the said lessee discontinuing the cultivation of cane on the whole area fit for such cultivation, or on the breach or non-performance of the covenants and conditions on the part of the lessee herein contained to be paid, observed or performed. In the event of such re-entry the lessee shall not be entitled to compensation for any growing crop or improvements upon the land, which shall become the absolute property of the lessors.

#### •THE CANE AGREEMENT.

It seems to me that this is fairly plain and comprehensible, and I understand that, *mutatis mutandis*, it is the agreement used by the company in other parts of Queensland. But the whole position is not stated until the associated cane agreement is also presented. The salient features of it are as follow:

1. In consideration of the sum of one shilling sterling, now paid to the planter by the company, the planter agrees with the company, for the term of ..... years, to cultivate for the growth of sugar cane ..... acres of land. And unless prevented by fire, flood, or other causes over which he has no control, to plant and replant with sugar cane of varieties approved by the said company such portions of this area as will ensure ..... acres being fit for cutting during each crushing season. The planter also undertakes to carefully and efficiently cultivate and tend the said cane, and to properly drain the said land throughout the whole of the above term of years.

2. And in further consideration of the above sum of one shilling, the said planter, by these presents, sells, and absolutely makes over to the said company, its successors or assigns, all crops of the said sugar cane now growing, or which shall grow, on the said ..... acres of the said property for the said period of ..... And the planter, for the consideration aforesaid, hereby undertakes and agrees with the said company, its successors and assigns:—

3. To do all things necessary during the whole term aforesaid to protect the cane from injury of all kinds, and to ensure the company receiving the same sound, well trashed, and in a fit condition for manufacturing into sugar.

4. To deliver alongside or on the main tram-

way line of the company within twenty-four hours after cutting ..... tons per day of the said cane securely and properly loaded on trucks in such a way that such trucks shall, on the average, contain not less than 1 ton of cane, and when more than half-mile of portable line is provided either to deliver an additional 20 tons per day for each further half-mile, or part thereof, of portable line necessary for the removal of the crop, or to allow labor supplied by the said company to cut and load such additional tonnage, and to pay the said company for such work done at the rate usually paid in the district for cutting similar crops.

And the company, in consideration of the true and faithful performance of the aforesaid conditions of this agreement by the planter, agrees to purchase from the said planter all the sugar cane now growing or which shall grow on the said ..... acres of the said property during each year of the aforesaid period of ..... years. Provided always that the said cane is, in the opinion of the officers or agents of the company sound, free from trash, dirt, suckers (meaning any canes of late growth less than 3ft in length), and immature tops, and fit for manufacturing into sugar.

8. And the company undertakes and agrees to pay the said planter upon the terms and according to the ordinary custom of the said company for the cane delivered as aforesaid the following rates per ton of 2240 lbs., the weight of the said cane being determined in the usual manner on the said company's weigh-bridge:—For trashed cane from the first two crops on new scrub land ten shillings and three pence (10s 3d) per ton; for trashed cane from subsequent crops from scrub land or from forest land, eleven shillings and three pence (11s 3d) per ton. It is understood that trashed cane shall mean cane that has been thoroughly stripped of dead leaves at least twice, the first time in the case of plant cane to be not later than the 30th March of the year in which the crop is to be cut, and in the case of ratoon cane as soon as in the opinion of the company's officers it is fit for trashing, and the last time in both cases to be not more than six weeks or less than two weeks before crushing, such dead leaves having been so disposed of that they shall not cover up the cane stalks.

10. And the company undertakes to provide, free of charge, sufficient tramway material, delivered on the nearest main line, for the removal of the said cane from the field to the main line, and shall, before requiring delivery of the cane, give reasonable notice in writing to that effect to the said planter.

11. And further it is agreed that the company shall have the sole right of determining at what times during the said period of ..... years, the said cane shall be cut and delivered, but the company shall only be bound to receive once in every crushing season all cane grown on the said ..... acres, provided such cane is in the judgment of its officers or agents fit



for manufacturing into sugar, and the company will receive any cane, grown under this agreement, which has been planted before the 30th September in the preceding year or ratooned from crops cut during the preceding year, unless the same is then, in the judgment of its officers and agents, unfit to be manufactured into sugar.

12. And it is further agreed that if, in the colony of Queensland during the currency of this agreement the existing duty on sugar be altered, or an excise duty or export tax be imposed, the company shall have the right to reduce the prices for cane herein mentioned to the extent of the loss sustained by the said company in consequence thereof, without incurring responsibility for any loss to the said planter which may be occasioned thereby.

#### WHAT THE AGREEMENTS SUGGEST.

Whether the arrangements between the parties which these two agreements disclose are such as give the company a "whip hand," as my correspondent calls it, is obviously a matter of opinion. A point in my mind is that under the existing compacts the tenant-planters have covenanted to supply cane which has been trashed. Trashing is the one feature of sugar cultivation in respect to which I am prepared to admit a real and enduring labour difficulty, for it is not nice work for blacks, still less for whites. Obviously, then, the existence of a great many covenants to trash cane entered into by struggling farmers under the present law is a potential factor for consideration by the Federal Government when it is proposed to do anything which may make the carrying out of these covenants difficult or impossible. Notice that the Sugar Company safeguards itself against certain possibilities arising out of adverse tariff changes. That at least is business-like. But, on the other side, there is no obligation on the company's side to give the grower the benefit of any beneficent alteration of the tariff, nor is there provision for an abatement of features of the cane agreement in the event of the labour status quo being altered by legislation. As matters stand, it is not difficult to argue that the company has the better of the bargain. One does not, however, perceive any particular advantage in arguing about it at all. It is much more to the purpose that with the facts as they are (not as they might have been) before it, the Federal Parliament will know how to do practical justice to all concerned.

## CHAPTER XV.

### HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

A visit to the Herbert River country was not included in the programme made before we left Melbourne on a visit to some of the Queensland sugar districts. Not because the importance of the Herbert was underrated, but because we were tied to time, and had to make a choice which was largely determined by the running of the steamers which furnish the only means of coastal travelling north of Gladstone. At Cairns we met the courteous, accomplished and powerful Mr Farquhar, inspector for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. It was he who impressed upon us the undesirability of missing the Herbert country; it was he who, as with the touch of a magic hand, overcame all difficulties.

"You go to the Herbert," he said, "and leave the arrangements to me."

He looked like a man with whom these arrangements would be quite safe, and we—i.e., Mr Mauger and I—elected to go to the Herbert.

### A HAPPY OFFICIAL.

The port for this singularly prolific area of sugar land used to be Dungeness, but it is now Lucinda Point. We had touched here on our way north, had gone ashore for half an hour, walked up the long and well-built jetty and counted the habitations in sight. Here a Customs officer, the obliging Mr Ball, has his headquarters, and here, too, is a post-office of the best wood and iron. A veritable oven it was on the sweltering afternoon we dropped in, merely in a friendly way, to aid the Commonwealth revenue with a couple of messages of no greater importance than that they indicated to friends in the south that we were still of the earth.

"A quiet station for you, sir," I remarked to the perspiring gentleman slightly beyond middle age, who appeared at the counter, and whom I correctly judged to be the postmaster and whole staff.

"This quiet!" he exclaimed in a tone which politely blended surprise and reproach. "Oh, dear me, this is all right."

I felt rebuked, yet still heavy upon me was the sense of the awful dreariness of the prettily-named Point, in addition



to whose two astonishing public houses, grimly fronting each other, there are not more than half a dozen houses.

"You are not hard to satisfy, sir," I ventured in a speculative, groping, sparing-for-wind, sort of way.

"Is that your idea?" he briskly inquired. "Why, I was six years at — and three at —, and two at —." And so he rattled on, giving names which carried no shred of information to my mind, names which nobody could possibly have ever heard of, and which, he gave me to understand, belonged to places still further north, and much further inside the great northern State.

"I got tired of those places," the good postmaster continued, "that's why I wanted a change."

"Oh, you wanted more life," I ventured.

"Yes."

"And you came here."

"Yes."

I was conscious of a sort of sob in my voice, as, with deep emotion, I put the next question.

"Are you quite happy, sir?" I asked.

"Perfectly."

"Will you shake hands?"

"With pleasure. Why do you desire it!"

"Why do I desire it, sir? Because I have the honor to meet the only man in the public service of Australia who is perfectly happy."

All the party also shook hands, and if it hadn't been Sunday we should certainly have sung, "For he's a jolly good fellow." It was without doubt one of the most astounding discoveries of the trip. And, oh, what a lesson for us all was there in the serene contentment of that veteran official, faithfully and arduously doing his duty, and drawing his, I have no doubt, modest pay at far off and lonely Lucinda Point.

#### LUCINDA POINT REVISITED.

When we left that day a solitary commercial traveller whom we had landed stood on the jetty, and looked wistfully after us. He was bound for Ingham, fifteen miles inland, and I had observed that he was not very enthusiastic about it. He seemed to puff his big pipe viciously as the s.s. Palmer hauled off, and the scowl upon his countenance marked his sense of the ill taste of our somewhat overdone and demonstrative adieux. That he emerged safely from

the back country I know, but you would hardly have recognised in his bonny, smiling face at Townsville the man who a fortnight before had glared so savagely after us on that (for him) unpleasant Sunday afternoon at Lucinda Point.

Revisited, in accordance with our revised arrangements at Cairns, the lonely Point had a quite new interest for us. We were soon to discover how far-reaching was the hand of Magician Farquhar. We arrived about half-past six in the morning, and learned that we were fully expected. A special train was just leaving Macknade plantation, over twenty miles away, to carry us on. We learned, moreover, that orders had been given to detain the steamer next on turn for Townsville, until six o'clock next evening, if it were necessary to ensure the completion of our inquiries. It was plain that Mr Farquhar had not belied the impression we formed when he suggested that the arrangements might be left to him.

#### THE LANDLADY'S VIEWS.

Pending the arrival of the special train we established ourselves at one of the hotels—the "Royal," no less—and over our coffee heard the views of the landlady on the Kanaka and other questions.

"I've got my opinion," said this observant lady, who, deceived, probably, by the lordly way we had ordered toast, appears to have taken us for a couple of touring capitalists.

"Yes, madam," I said.

"Well, I think the Labor Party is making a great mistake in running down the Kanaka. The Japs, the Chinese, the Malays, are the real competitors with white labor. I know it, for I've lived years on a sugar plantation. But the cry, 'Down with the Kanaka,' is foolish, because the Kanaka makes work for the whites. The more he does the more the whites get to do, but you know these members of Parliament can't be brought to understand things. Isn't that a fact?"

I admitted that the idea was entitled to careful consideration, and the lady went on.

"We are suffering already," she said, "from the effects of the unrest caused by the report that the Kanakas are to be all sent away. In this district the mills always did a great deal of repairing work



at this season; now they are hardly doing any. Nobody knows exactly what the future is to be, everybody is anxious, and nobody can afford to be enterprising."

In these observations we recognised that the general situation was accurately described. They only helped to confirm an idea about what there is little room for argument, that the sooner the debatable question is definitely settled one way or the other the better for all concerned.

#### ON TOWARDS HALIFAX.

It is a run of fifteen miles by tram before the little town of Ingham is reached. We have for our host and companion in the special train Mr E. H. Waring, the estimable manager of Macknade plantation and mill. We pass over some mangrove flats and then into country suitable for sugar-growing, but still held out of cultivation because, I learn, the owners—including one notable absentee—will not relax terms upon which no man with small means could expect to do profitable business with them. We hear that thirty years ago sugar-growing was entered upon here by the Messrs F. and A. Neave, in partnership with Mr Waller, members of whose family still hold rich sugar possessions and at least one beautiful mansion. But I am told that the Messrs Neave were preceded by Mr H. Stone and Messrs Scott Bros. and others, who pioneered the industry in the days when Cardwell was regarded as the most convenient port. We pass the hamlet known as Halifax, a new agricultural settlement, and I regret that time does not admit of our inspecting in detail what I understand to be a rallying point for all sorts of people. These include the Kanaka who has become a permanency, and who is said to be a very gorgeous creature when he goes about in his store clothes. Here also are Chinese, Japs, Malays, all "sorts and conditions of men" of as many colors as races. Its detractors say that gambling is one of the marked features of social life at Halifax, and you can't prevent people talking.

#### TO THE HERBERT RIVER.

Nor is it practicable for us to spend any time in the better town of Ingham, the administrative centre of a countryside now marked by beautiful growing crops of cane. We continue our journey some miles beyond, to the bank of the broad

and beautiful Herbert. Here a Kanaka crew is waiting with a boat, and we are rowed upstream towards the plantation headquarters on the opposite shore. I get permission to relieve a Kanaka oarsman, and gain practical experience of the strength of the current. The while Mr Mauger pursues his studies in natural history, and we learn with a reverence befitting men who are upborne on the river's broad bosom by a few thin planks—no offence to the well-built and comfortable Macknade boat—about other creatures of the Creator's kingdom. For the river is the abode of alligators, and "nervous" as these creatures are alleged to be, they are animals which in close proximity I prefer to regard with profound respect. We land without mishap, and receive the kindest welcome from the manager's wife, the gracefully hospitable mistress of Macknade.

#### THE MACKNADE PROPERTY.

This plantation will take rank, I suppose, amongst the best of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's properties in Queensland. The area included in the operations is between 6000 and 7000 acres. A small proportion of this is cultivated direct by the management, the greater part being held by tenants on the conditions fully described in my last article. The well-appointed mill crushes in the season 450 tons per day of twenty-four hours, the work being maintained by two shifts. The experience here is that a ton of sugar is obtained from eight tons of cane, and the average yield of cane is about 20 tons per acre. This season has been an exceptionally wet one for the Herbert River, which does not pretend to rival the Johnstone moisture. For 1889 the fall was 81 inches, for 1900 it was 64 inches; but up to the end of April (the period of my visit) it was 103 inches for 1901. It is anticipated that this year not less than 50,000 tons of sugar grown in the district will be crushed at Macknade, and for this the tenant farmers will receive at least 11s.3d a ton, cut and landed on the tramway. In the past that was all, but in order to encourage the farmers to grow good cane, they are this season to be paid according to quality, as determined by the palarscope, but in no case will they get less than the figure mentioned, that being a guaranteed minimum.



### THE WHITE LABOR.

About fifty whites are engaged all the year round by the Macknade management—overseers, tradesmen, ploughmen, and others. When the mill is in full swing, about 40 men are at work there. Of these about 30 are Europeans, about 50 are Japanese, and the other 10 Malays. The wages of the whites employed depend, of course, upon the character of the work done. Engineers, for instance, get up to L5 a week, general mechanics L3 a week, ploughmen 25s a week, in all cases with rations, reckoned to be worth 8s a week. If married artisans are employed—and there are some at Macknade—each family is provided with a comfortable house, and his rent is reckoned at 10 per cent. upon the cost of building it. Water is laid on, fuel is charged for at the cost of cutting it, and bringing it in from the forest, and the family buys its supplies from the plantation store at cost price. In addition, every married man gets 8s per week cash, in lieu of rations.

### THE KANAKAS EMPLOYED.

Employed on the area cultivated directly by the Macknade management, there were at the time of our visit 150 Kanakas, including only eight women. Employed by the tenant farmers were about 250 Kanakas, including 30 or 40 women. From 80 to 100 of the farmers' boys were serving second or third engagements. On the mill plantation all were indent boys—i.e., those serving for the first time. The management reckon that the indent boys cost about 2s 3d a day for six days a week. The factors of this sum are—(1) cost of importation, (2) wages, (3) food (for seven days), (5) clothes, (6) medicine and medical attendance. If boys who have fulfilled their indent terms are re-engaged, the company pays L20 a year with food, but provides no clothing. Mr Waring assured me that the death rate amongst the Kanakas under his control was not much more than 20 per cent. "I have only had five deaths," he said, amongst about 150 indent boys since they came here. As a fact, we have from 90 to 93 per cent. of the boys working every week, the remainder being in the hospital." I saw and inspected this hospital, which is suitably arranged and comfortable. A well-appointed dispensary is under the

charge of a skilled man, and the sick Kanakas apparently get the full degree of attention that the Queensland law provides for. "While they are in the hospital," remarked the manager, "they virtually get everything they ask for." The Kanakas are well housed at Macknade, and their quarters when I saw them were marvellously clean. Their food is first-rate—good meat, white bread of the best from the hands of a skilled baker, potatoes, rice, and tea. There was no obvious fault in the quality, and the management claim to be governed by the sound policy of giving men whom they expect to work for them all the strength which comes from a sufficiency of good food. If there seemed to be meagreness anywhere, it was in the scant bedding and equally scant clothes, although I do not forget that it is a country in which for the greater part of the year not much covering is needed.

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### AN HOUR'S TRASHING.

One special reason I shall always have for remembering the Herbert River district is that in it I got my first practical experience of what is meant by trashing cane. At Goondi, on the Johnstone River, I tried the work in a haphazard sort of fashion, in the midst of a gang of malodorous Kanakas, and was glad to escape at the end of a short quarter of an hour. At Macknade, owing to the courtesy of the manager, Mr Waring, the opportunity was afforded me of doing an hour's work without any companionship, although under the severe eye of an overseer accustomed to rule Kanakas. This gentleman presented himself occasionally, and, as in duty bound, warned me against breaking the cane.

Few whites engaged on plantations have ever "demeaned" themselves by even trying such work, and Manager Waring was not easily convinced that I meant business. On realising that I did, he promptly selected a suitable crop, of about eight months' growth, which had never been trashed, and cheerfully bade me "Wire in."

It was a hot day, but not the worst experienced on my visit to North Queensland. A light rain had fallen



during nearly the whole of the forenoon. The cane was, therefore, wet and uncomfortable, but it had ceased raining before, at the hour of high noon, I got rid of some clothes and plunged into the wet and steaming cane crop.

A gang of Kanakas was simultaneously put on to the same field, but a sufficient distance away to preserve my isolation. The object was, of course, to enable me to compare their work with mine when it was all over. For in this world so much depends upon comparisons.

Trashing, as I have explained, consists of stripping the cane of dead leaves and clearing away the mass of decaying vegetation which had fallen and covered the ground, so that the air and sun might get access to the roots of the growing plants.

A natural desire — probably begot of British vanity — to make the most of the time, and do as much as I could, prompted me to go at the work vigorously "from the jump." I had obtained from the previous experience a rough and ready idea of what to do, but had yet to gather knowledge of how to accomplish it by economised effort. First it had to be ascertained how and where to stand in relation to the canes—some upright, some sprawling upon the ground, the rest projecting themselves at all angles between vertical and horizontal. It took me quite all the first quarter of the time to make the necessary, essential, and mere fundamental discoveries in this connection. By that time I had worked my way a few rods into the field, for I confined my efforts to one row of plants.

Drenched with the rain freely presented to me by the dripping herbage, and by a perspiration which suggested that I was being gently but surely stewed away, I quickly realised that clothing of any kind was too much clothing. Yet I had reduced myself to a few garments. I had started with a hat, but that was discarded as foolish superfluity within the first few minutes. I was conscious that a tropical sun was powerful overhead, but sought to avert the perils of bareheadedness by shrinking into the cover of the cane, the while plucking valiantly at the dead and dying herbage.

At first it seemed a good plan to face the work, and, holding the cane with one hand, trash with the other, using both

hands only in drawing the trash away from the roots. Then it was borne in upon me that this meant rather more than I am used to in what the Salvation Army would call "knee drill," not to speak of twisting the neck and describing such a series of kinks in the back that the awful suspicion arose that the displaced sections of my vertebrae would afterwards refuse to again co-operate in their accustomed relationships, and that any reputation I might possess as a "straight" man was going fast.

To ameliorate the situation I next tried a flank attack, standing sideways on to my selected row of cane, straightening the knees and causing the back to describe one graceful arch instead of a succession of wriggles. Ten minutes of this adroitness produced such acute symptoms of curvature of the spine that I reverted to the original position, and once more tied myself in knots until there seemed to be nothing left to tie with. I stopped to unravel, mopped the huge sweat-drops out of my flowing eyes, and, facing about, tried a new movement, back in front. That is to say, I thrust my aching back against the cane, and grabbing at the dead herbage which lay before me worked a perilous crab-like passage along the row of cane, clearing stalks and roots as I went.

This seemed to be the best plan of all until my head became so much abraded that an extension of an already large bald patch which sufficiently displays my bump of self-esteem seemed so inevitable that, in sheer self-pity, I had to desist. Three positions had been tried, and there was nothing which the most robust imagination could call happiness in any of them.

"How goes the enemy?" I here shouted in tones of carefully simulated cheerfulness to my friend Mauger, who, watch in hand, was sitting on a log in the roadway marking the flight of time.

"You've done twenty minutes," he vociferated in reply, and the shock nearly killed me. I had thought that the hour was up, and that the man had gone to sleep and forgotten me.

"For the honor of the British race, and in the interest of a White Australia," I murmured to myself, by way of encouragement, and at it again I went—trashing, trashing, trashing.

Sometimes it was the forward position first adopted, sometimes the flank at-



tack, sometimes the crab or backward swish. Each furnished a kind of rest to the other. Nor were these three the only positions. Instead of the half-petition attitude, alias squatting, I frankly knelt down for part of the time. Then I tried right knee down with a seat on the right heel. Then I fairly and ungracefully sat down, and had a go in that posture.

Meanwhile the stewing process went on, and I was conscious of becoming impregnated with the rank material and odor of the cane brake. My clothes were filthy, my hands cut and sore, the backs plentifully speckled with the sharp-stinging cane nettle, my feet flopping in boots half-filled with water, and so heavily laden with mud that I seemed to be violating the rights of other men in taking up so much country.

Moreover, I had got well into the field by this time. The air was dank and heavy, and I should have given anything for a drink. Next time I tackle a job of that sort I shall carry my teapot with me.

From time to time the overseer broke through the surrounding tangle of foliage, gazed at me with an expression which I thought at the time meant approval, but I have since imagined might have been either amusement or contempt; then went his way. To tell the truth, although not a churlish person, and generally liking company, I preferred to have that hour alone with my own troubles. The circumstances did not lend themselves to light and airy conversation, and the occasional remarks of that overseer bordered upon flippancy.

When I had trashed for what seemed to be a Sabbath Day—which everybody knows is longer than an ordinary day—I heard the timekeeper shouting in the dim distance, and realised that the task was over.

It was then I plucked up heart of grace, and shouted in reply,

"What's the matter?"

"Time's up, come out."

"You don't say so. Why, I'm just beginning to like it."

"Come out, can't you?"

"All right, all right. Well, that was a quick hour. Wonderful how the time flies when you're busy."

This I said as I rejoined Mr Waring and Mr Mauger; but, to state the whole

case, I must admit losing my way in trying to get out, and ultimately reaching the party after a quite unpremeditated tour round the fields.

"You're knocked out," they said.

"Not at all," I answered. "How can you say such a thing. It's beautiful work, and this is just the climate for it. But, Mr Waring, for goodness sake give me something to drink!"

I did not ask in vain.

One of the glories of Macknade is a magnificent swimming bath, about sixteen feet square and nine feet deep. It seemed to me that day to be the nearest thing to the conception of Heaven I had ever met with.

So much for an hour's trashing. I have not thought it necessary to treat it too seriously because, at most, it has little significance. It proved to me that a white man could do the work, but that it was a very uncomfortable business, and exceptionally trying. That I was by no means "knocked out" is evident from the fact that once I got clean again I was ready for, and went through, an active afternoon. If trashing be really required—and I am inclined to the view that its importance is greatly over-rated—and white men have to do it, the planters will refrain from putting in such dense crops. The work does not require strong arms, and few would rush it as I did for that hour, doing, as the overseer remarked, a great deal more than was necessary, for lack of sufficient knowledge of precisely what to do. About two chains of plants I had cleared; in the same hour the Kanakas cleared each about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  chains. I rather imagined that my work was more faithfully done than theirs; but imagination is tricky, and I had better stick to the verdict of the overseer. "Very well trashed."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

To a man who loves a horse, the stable at Macnade is worth inspecting. There is molasses in every manger, and the stock are very fond of it. Great draught horses in the finest condition are there, and a nice lot of roadsters, but as my business is not with them, I must pass on, merely remarking that I have rarely been better mounted than on the afternoon upon which Mr Waring and I rode



over to the adjoining plantation, known as Ripple Creek. This is the property of Messrs Wood Bros. and Boyd, and lies between three and four miles west of Macnade. We found Mr Boyd, the managing partner, at home, and spent a pleasant couple of hours in inspection and conversation.

#### PLANTATION AND MILL.

The plantation comprises some 1900 acres of freehold. About 1000 acres of this are under cultivation, and between 500 and 600 acres of cane are cut each year. A mill is established on the property, and its purpose is not merely to supply raw sugar to a refinery, but to complete the manufacture of white sugar from the cane grown on the plantation, and supplied by about forty farmers who grow for Ripple Creek. Some of these are tenants of Messrs Wood Bros. and Boyd. They started upon cleared land, and pay a royalty of 1s a ton on their cane by way of rent, but have no rights of purchase. The mill-refinery, if that term may be used, is the only one of its kind in North Queensland, and is understood to be very profitable, its product selling well in all the Australian markets. The price obtained is, as a general rule, ten shillings a ton less than the ruling price of sugar of a like grade supplied by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, with which the Ripple Creek people are friendly competitors. The capacity of the mill is 4000 tons for the season, and the chief trouble of the management is said to be that they do not get enough cane. Only a single shift is worked during the crushing season, and the output of the mill does not average more than 2000 tons a year.

#### THE BLACK LABOR.

On Ripple Creek Plantation there are employed over 160 colored aliens of all sorts. These include 136 Polynesians, of whom 122 are indent boys and the other 14 under re-engagements. Several of them have been as long as fourteen years on the plantation. One has been twenty-two years in the country and holds an exempt ticket—that is to say, he is entitled to come and go as he pleases, the Kanaka regulations having no application to him. Mr Boyd tells me that although his yearly average of Kanakas is not less than 130, he has only had three deaths on the plantation in a

period of eight years. Concerning the indent boys—i.e., those engaged in the Polynesian islands—it is said that a considerable proportion had been in Queensland before. For what frequently happens is this: A Kanaka will engage in the islands to serve three years on the indent, take a re-engagement for a year, follow that, it may be, with other like re-engagements, and then go home. He has carried back with him the fruits of his labor, usually in a few cases of Brummagem rubbish, a few tomahawks to help his chief in tribal warfare, and occasionally (though it is forbidden) firearms. He stars it brilliantly in his native island for a year or two. Then when his countrymen have ceased to give him the respect induced by his possessions—curious phase of civilisation this to discover in Polynesia!—and he finds himself of no further special account, he looks out for a recruiting ship, re-engages and starts again as an indent boy. Usually, owing to his previous experience, he is able the second time to make a better bargain than that represented by acceptance of the legal minimum wage of L6 a year. He may get L8, L10, or even L12, but I do not think that the lavish hand of the recruiting agent gets far beyond the last deeply impressive figure.

#### AIR INSPECTION QUESTION.

A very serious complaint is made by Mr Boyd in regard to the importation of Kanakas. It seems that Dr. M'Donald, the local inspecting officer, is "very strict"—that is to say, he is noted for a clear sense of his duty when called upon to say whether islanders who arrive at the Herbert River are physically fit or unfit, in accordance with the Queensland law on the subject. As things stand at present, the medical examination of Kanakas has to be carried out at the port of arrival in Queensland, and that may be Brisbane, Townsville, anywhere. It is alleged that the examination is sometimes so casual and insufficient, or that the medical view of what is fit is so accommodating, that islanders passed at other places and transferred to the Herbert by no means satisfy Dr. M'Donald. Regardless of what the examiners elsewhere may have determined, he insists upon a close investigation at his own hands; and if he find reason to condemn, no absurd deference to the doings—or the omissions



—of his professional brethren elsewhere restrains him from proclaiming the facts. As Dr. M'Donald has deservedly won the confidence and respect of the Herbert River planters, they stand by him to a man. Largely because of this Mr Boyd bore the full burden of an expensive lawsuit consequent upon his refusal to accept certain boys sent to him and passed at another port. Seven out of a "consignment"—please note that I am using a Queensland term employed in respect to human beings—of thirty were declared by Dr. M'Donald to be physically unfit, the causes being stated as follow:—

Under sixteen years of age ..	3
Lame.. . . .	1
Deformed.. . . .	1
Diseased.. . . .	2
Total.. . . .	7

There does not appear to be much doubt that the rejection was fully justified on every other save legal grounds. But as the strict letter of the law had been fulfilled by the passing of these unfortunate islanders at the port of arrival, Mr Boyd's case—turning chiefly on a question of agency—failed. The Queensland Government's sense of the propriety of his action was, however, marked by a grace grant of £300, although that amount did not nearly reimburse him for what it cost to fight a matter of principle. The boys were left on his hands. Time cures the under-age defect—if the youngsters live; but the lame man, the deformed, and the diseased have been a burden on the indenters from the day of their arrival. The present system is certainly defective, and I heard it roundly asserted that in some other phases of the working of the regulations Polynesians who had been rejected as physically unfit at the Herbert had been allowed to land and serve at other places. The claim made by Mr Boyd, and joined in by all the planters on the Herbert, that the test medical inspection ought to be made at the port where the islanders are actually landed for work—as distinct from the port of arrival—would seem to be warranted alike by the principles of humanity and of business equity.

#### COST OF THE KANAKA.

Now, Mr Boyd is one of the men of whom you find a good many in North Queensland, who says that the Kanaka is not cheap. These men would like us to

believe them, and I would like to be polite enough to do so, but I cannot and do not, and it is of no use mincing the matter. Very much, however, depends upon what you call cheapness. Mr Boyd has made elaborate calculations, and as a result even he only undertakes to show that an indent boy costs £100 for his three years, or £33 6s 8d per annum. He puts the wages down at £6 a year for first indenters, and £12 for second comers, appraises the rations at £12, clothes at £2, and hospital charges at £1 a year per boy. The cost of importation, plus registration fee, is reckoned at £25 a head, and there is the £5 a head further obligation in return passage. Divide the total of £30 by the number of years' service, and we have £10 per year per Kanaka. Perhaps I may venture to make a summary of my own on Mr Boyd's data. Here it is:—

Wages (say) .. . . .	£10
Rations .. . . .	10
Clothes .. . . .	2
Medicine .. . . .	1
Indenting and Returning .. . . .	10
	£33

I have in the above used the mean of the wages rates quoted, and it will be seen that we get very close to Mr Boyd's total. He may pay less than an average of £10 a year wages, and to that extent the figures would be reduced. On the other hand, boys may, and do, die, although the Ripple Creek average is so remarkably low. If the Kanaka succumb in the earlier stages of his engagement, the planter loses in indenting charges; on the other hand, if he die towards the end of the term, the planter saves the return passage. All these things are talked about and reckoned with in that essentially business-like atmosphere of the North. Then, to those who may follow these calculations another factor must be mentioned. It is held at Ripple Creek that, what with wet weather, time off for sickness and holidays, the average loss of working time per boy is about 6 per cent. During that lost time the awful Kanaka, with a quite savage inconsiderateness, goes on eating his £10 worth of rations, or drinking his sovereign's worth of physic, as the case may be. Wickedly and wantonly also he continues wearing out his £2 worth of clothes, just as if he were hard at work trashing cane.



### A WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY.

"I should like to let you understand," said Mr Boyd in the course of a conversation, "that such an industry as we have established here is worth more consideration at the hands of those who talk of depriving us of the only labor with which it may be carried on."

"You are sure and definite on that point."

"Yes. I have had experience here, in Fiji and other places, and I know exactly what I am talking about."

"And you regard the Kanaka as essential."

"Yes, we could not expect to carry on without his labor."

"You would like to see Australia a white man's country?"

"Yes, and may I ask what your idea of a white man's country is?"

"It is really unimportant for the moment what mine is, Mr Boyd. May I ask for yours?"

"You may. I consider that a white man's country is a country where a white man does nothing, and the niggers do all the work."

"I quite understand, Mr Boyd, even though I do not necessarily admire; but you were about to say something about the value of the industry."

### IMPORTANCE OF THE INDUSTRY.

"Yes. Incidental to a change in my bookkeeping arrangements, I have just had accounts made up for ten months. I have averaged the other two so as to get sound approximate figures for a year, and I find this: In the twelve months we pay for wages and rations no less than L10,544. Of this the Kanaka wages amounts to L1351, not a great proportion of the whole, but representing the money reward of the labor which makes the total payment possible. Then it has cost us L2039 for repairs and alteration to the mill and extensions of the plantation tramways, and L470 for implements. We pay L1000 a year for maize brought from the south, for we keep over 140 horses. In the year we sent away 1453 tons of sugar. On this we pay in freight and charges, exclusive of commission, L1 10s 9d per ton. Then because of this work the post and telegraph business, which we manage, is a considerable item, as you may understand, for there are about 80 Europeans, including women and children, at Ripple Creek, and our business correspondence

is extensive. You may gather from these figures that the industry which this one place represents on the Herbert River is not unimportant."

"I do. I am satisfied that you are engaged in a very prosperous business."

"Now here are figures showing loss of time. I find that for the ten months for all hands there were 30,800 working days, and that the lost days—those in which no work could be done—number 1750. In a climate like this, presuming that white labor could be got to do the work, there would be a very large loss of time, as all experience of white labor in this part of Australia shows."

"You have 136 Kanakas, I understand. How many women are included?"

"We have only three women."

This brought us to a phase of the question to which I have already directed attention in connection with my visit to Cairns, and which, perhaps, the reader will regard as sufficiently indicated by Mr Boyd's answer to my last question, for I do not want to discuss it ad nauseam. I need not, then, reproduce the subsequent conversation as, Mr Boyd accompanying us part of the way, my host and I rode back to Macnade, after nightfall. For the time I forgot alike the alleged virtues and the natural vices of the Kanakas in the profound earnestness of my anxious inquiries, as to whether it was customary for the gentle alligator to roam at eventide on the banks of the river, seeking whom he may devour.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT—VICTORIA PLANTATION.

Following a day of many experiences—not the least memorable being that obtained in my hour's trashing—we spent a night at Macnade as the guests of Mr and Mrs Waring. We rose early, recrossed the river and found in waiting on the other side a special train by which we were to travel to the Sugar Company's other great property in the Herbert River District, the Victoria plantation and mill. Mr George Forrest, the manager, was away at the time of our visit. The next in command, Mr W. Berry, did the honors of the plantation. Our party was received and entertained with a royal hospitality by Mr and



Mrs Berry, at whose comfortable residence we enjoyed *dejeuner a la fourchette*, for we had really breakfasted before leaving Macnade.

#### A GREAT PROPERTY.

It was a wet, miserable morning, and underfoot it was sloppy and uncomfortable. But I got a horse from the acting-manager, and under his guidance made an interesting inspection of what we in the south would call the home station, buildings, etc. The Kanakas were apparently housed and fed much as we had been accustomed to see them on the Sugar Company's properties, and all was order and regularity. About three miles from the little town of Ingham is Victoria plantation. There are 5000 acres of land suitable for the growth of sugar in this estate. A proportion of it is planted with the Mauritius bean or some other green manure, and a further proportion recuperates in fallow. Under the direct control of the plantation management, only about 500 acres are cultivated with cane each year. The remainder of the property is held by farmers, most of whom are tenants, but a few have achieved their freeholds. A first-class sugar mill is the great feature of the Victoria property, as it is at the company's other estate, Macnade. In all about 70 farmers send their cane to the Victoria mill, these including tenants of other land-owners. I was told that some of these pay as much as 10s, and in a few instances, £1 an acre rent for their land, but the arrangements under which rent takes the form of 1s per ton on the cane raised extends to many tenants, besides those of the Sugar Refining Company. The price paid for cane at the Victoria mill is 13s a ton.

#### RE FERTILISING WORK.

In this district the need of manuring the land comes after about four or five years' service at sugar-growing. At least, it is held by some of the authorities that after such service the rich, organic properties in the soil become exhausted. The sugar company plant plentiful crops of leguminous plants, which, when in full leaf, are ploughed in. Other manures used are bone-dust, costing about £4 10s a ton; sulphate of ammonia, £12 10s; and superphosphates, at £8 a ton. The

prices given are f.o.b. at Townsville. The manuring means a heavy charge, therefore it becomes a factor of special consideration. The sugar company provides for the importation of the artificial manures, and furnishes them to its tenants, who are not expected to pay the bill until the manured crop is cut. It is an open question amongst the planters in Herbert as to how much profit is gained by manuring, and what should be used for re-fertilising. Mr Waring, speaking from an experience in Fiji, before he became manager of the Macnade, expresses a strong preference for green manuring as the cheapest and most effective. The Sugar Refining Company has been fertilising on a scale so extensive that as much as 30s an acre per year is spent on some of its land. It remains to be proved whether the results are commensurate. Meanwhile the tenants are reluctant, and it is said that their lands suffer accordingly. There is no compulsion, except in the cases of lessees who have covenanted to manure their holdings. By the way, the gentle Kanaka draws the line at manuring — i.e., with the artificial stuff. The Jap is more complaisant. He gets through the work, when done by hand, at the rate of about an acre a day. Now most of it is done by machine, with which a driver and a couple of horses will do 5 acres a day.

#### WHITE LABOR.

The mill is capable of turning out about 9000 tons of sugar in the season—the last six months of the year. It treats when in full swing about 2500 tons of cane in a week's continuous (i.e., day and night) work. During the off season, 90 whites are employed on the property, mostly in association with the mill; in the crushing season the number rises to about 140. The rates of wages are much the same as those I have quoted in respect to Macnade.

#### THE KANAKAS.

For the headquarters plantation work at Victoria, 147 Kanakas were employed at the time of my visit. These included only two women, who were fulfilling their first engagements in Queensland. The company works principally with indent boys, leaving re-engagement to the farmers, and practically all the latter prefer to make contracts with boys who have served in the district. The Kanakas are said to be principally employed in



plantation work—which includes clearing land for prospective European tenants. but both at Macnade and Victoria Kanakas are also engaged part of their time in cutting firewood and bringing it in to the mill. There is reason to doubt whether they may legally be so employed, and it is not pretended, of course, that there is special need of Kanaka labor for that class of work.

#### FARMERS' BOYS.

The farmers associated with the Victoria mill employ between them just upon 250 Kanakas, of whom not more than six are women. The company indents for all who undertake to employ Polynesians, and the great majority of the 250 it has supplied to the farmers are serving first engagements. Perhaps 20 or 25 had been in Queensland before. The figures given in respect to Macnade, Ripple Creek and Victoria do not include some 50 Kanakas distributed amongst the farms who are serving re-engagements. Some of these are "exempt" boys, therefore come and go as they like. Others, although not technically exempt, have been six or eight years in the country, and have acquired a standing in the British State of Queensland—which may not harbor "slaves"—of which they will not easily be deprived.

#### HEALTH OF THE POLYNESIANS.

I am assured that the general health of the Kanaka is good at and around Victoria plantation, but that this season it is not so satisfactory as usual. The Polynesian is a weak-chested being, and he has suffered much this year because of the exceptional rainfall, and its consequences to those who have to work in the wet cane brake and sloppy country, so much of it marsh, that in some parts tile draining is necessary—and, may I say here—effective. I am assured at Victoria that there is a good deal in the complaint made at Ripple Creek, that the medical inspection regarded as satisfactory elsewhere has not always proved on the Herbert River a guarantee that boys passed are physically as fit as they ought to be. The hospital and associated arrangements for the Kanakas at Victoria are much the same as they are at Macnade. They are conceived and carried out in a humane and kindly spirit, and I did not perceive that they afford any room for complaint under the circumstances.

#### THE "INDENT" JAP.

In this district the Chinese figures largely. He is a principal here and there, holding and cultivating land. Some 40 or 50 of the Flowery Landers work for the farmers—at trashing, weeding, cutting, anything. The mill only uses this class of labor in the crushing season. Not so many Chinese as Japs, however, for the Victoria people have nearly 80 of the Far East "Britons" on their books. These are not merely enterprising adventurers who happened along. They were regularly indented from their native land, where engagements were made with them for a period of 3½ years. The indent Jap gets 27s a month, with cooked rations, and he is entitled during his term of service to four suits of clothes of the not very high quality or ornate style supplied to the Kanakas. I had thought the Japs had begun to "fancy themselves" so much that terms of the sort indicated would be regarded as a degradation, but, apparently, my thoughts ran on wrong lines. The Japs are used at the planting—delightfully easy work, as I have shown—and do some trashing in the off season. Their chief business is, however, in the mill, and, as during the crushing season they are all required there, it is rarely that a Jap is called upon to do the necessarily concurrent work of cutting cane. As to the capacity of the Japs, I heard but one opinion. They are good, enduring workers, and tackle anything. It is not too much to say that these men are the real peril to Australian labor, more particularly as the Jap of to-day is "a citizen of no mean country." The Kanaka can be "managed," and his chief, however indignant, does not know how to begin to make a noise. Attempt to apply like "management" to the Jap, and prepare for diplomatic rote, pourparler, yea, it may be, an ultimatum. Let there be no mistake, the Jap trouble in the north is no small one. We will not quite realise how big it is until we attempt to cure it. Then—well the treatment of the Queensland Sugar Mill Advances Bill by the Imperial Government here becomes a significant object lesson.

#### A FARMER'S VIEW.

I have an interesting chat with Mr F. M'Donagh, one of the company's tenant farmers, who does not hesitate to express his opinions. He has a holding of 100 acres, about three-



fourths of which may be regarded as good sugar land. He cultivates about 50 acres of it, and as a man without capital, he acknowledges the help given to him by the Sugar Company at every stage. He is guaranteed 13s a ton for his cane for a period of seven years, and also participates in an allowance of a penny per ton to be paid by the company for all over 9000 tons which the whole body of farmers may succeed in cultivating this season. The company wants much cane for its mill, and, therefore, encourages all willing to grow it. "I make just a living," said Mr M'Donagh, "but I am getting on."

"Do you employ Kanakas?"

"I have only one boy of my own, but the company lends us boys as we want them. We pay from 2s 6d to 2s 9d per day for the labor of a boy the company sends us."

"Have you seen white men working the cane?"

"Not trashing. I have seen them cutting."

"With what result?"

"Well, I remember a white gang of thirteen men five or six years ago who took contracts for cutting and loading, their price being, I think, 2s 9d per ton. They worked for two or three months, but they were not satisfactory. I have not seen any whites at the job since. The work is all done by Kanakas."

"Do you think the retention of the Kanaka necessary?"

"Yes. I think we'd hardly get on well without them."

Incidentally I learn that in the crushing season Mr M'Donagh holds a post in the mill as weighbridge clerk, and receives 36s a week, with an allowance of 8s a week for rations. He got his start with this, but, I understand, he has made some little headway, and will not in future need that mill billet, preferring to give his effort to what one day will be his own property.

#### RICHMOND RIVER METHODS.

Mr Berry, I find, has had some experience in the working of sugar plantations on the Richmond River. Four years ago the cutting there was all done by whites, who also did the trashing. To cut, load and punt on the Richmond the Colonial Sugar Company's gangs got

2s 6d a ton, with rations. During the colder part of the season—July to October—some of these gangs were doing from 4 to 5 tons per man daily, on good cane, but they fell off considerably in the hotter season. From eight to fourteen men would constitute these gangs. Some would go right through, but the number was not great. Changes of personnel were frequent. Day after day saw great strong men confessing defeat, and giving in. Some gangs broke up altogether during that especially trying time, the last three months, and of three mills on the river, one had to stop, because the supply of cane could not be maintained. I learned, further, that the planting conditions on the Richmond River are "much the same" as they are in Queensland, about 5ft 6in being the space between the rows of cane. In the north it varies from 4ft to 6ft. On the Richmond there is a moist heat, with a very heavy rainfall, but still it is not considered that the climatic conditions are, at their worst, so trying as those which, at the same period of the year, obtain in the tropical north.

#### SAME OLD GAGS.

In the Herbert River district I heard many repetitions of views expressed in other sugar-growing localities. They furnish the conversational pabulum of the Far North, and are made up of such sentences as these:—

"White labor might be all right, but, you know, whites are so unreliable."

"Whites cannot stand the work; it's no use talking, they simply can't."

"You know this White Australia cry is sheer humbug. Why, the Kanakas are fast working themselves out. Look at the figures. The thing will settle itself."

"The cutting machine may make a difference, but we'll still need the Kanaka."

"The Kanaka does not compete with the whites; other colored aliens do. The Kanaka makes work for the whites."

And so on. The same man will sometimes run through the whole gamut, and your admiration for his earnestness is such that you really haven't the heart to say either that his statements are contradictory—which is obviously the case—or that you doubt either his Solomonian wisdom or his Washingtonian veracity.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## AT BUNABERG.

At the request of the Colonial Sugar Company's inspector, Mr Farquhar, to whom I am ever indebted for a pleasant and instructive time in the Herbert River districts, the s.s. Wakefield awaited our return to Lucinda Point. Thither Mr Waring, manager of Macnade, carried us by special train, and we took our leave of a genial host, quiet, kindly and well-informed gentleman, and altogether as fine a man as I ever wish to meet. The boat was to remain till six o'clock in the evening, had we desired, but we had hurried through the morning and got on board a little after twelve noon. We had delayed the Wakefield about five hours, and her passengers were filled with emotion. We made a sufficiently ostentatious embarkation, and the whisperings and mutterings on all sides, which, at the time, I supposed to be evidence of admiration and awe, were probably, I have since thought, the outcome of quite a different group of feelings. For it was Saturday, and these people wanted to get to Townsville before dark. So did we. The Wakefield is all right in a nice fresh breeze, and her menu won the great throbbing heart of my companion, Mauger, M.P., but one would not choose to sleep on board that gallant little craft if there was a reasonable hotel alternative. The Duchess—I am sure the lady was of no lesser rank—who had distributed herself over the cabin sky light, and required the steward to bring things, had already passed one night on the vessel and was satisfied. We copiously apologised for being late, then chummed up all round and had a pleasant run to Townsville. There it is not my present purpose to linger. Sufficient to say that we got back to our old places on the s.s. Barcoo on Monday night, and on Wednesday morning landed at Gladstone. Then by rail the same afternoon we proceeded to the great sugar district of Bundaberg, and the next day was devoted to what I freely confess at the outset was a necessarily scamped and insufficient survey and examination of some of the interests incidental to the sugar industry in sub-tropical Queensland.

## FAIRYMEAD ESTATE.

Fairymead is one of the principal sugar-growing centres in the Bundaberg district. It is the property of Messrs

A., H. and E. Young, three brothers, and prior to its purchase by the planters in 1879 was a cattle run. Of Fairymead there is now an area of 4500 acres under cane, and a proportion equal to about two-thirds is cut in the season. On this property is established a sugar mill, which, like that at Ripple Creek (Herbert River), turns out white sugar direct from the cane-juice. The mill is capable of dealing with 500 tons of cane a day, the output being about 50 tons of sugar. Mill operations extend from July for five months in an ordinary, and perhaps for six months in a good, season. Some twenty farmers, the areas of whose holdings range from 30 to 100 acres, send their cane to the Fairymead mill, and the price paid is from 10s to 11s a ton, in accordance with quality. Some of this cane travels as much as fifty miles by rail. The Messrs Young's sugars sell in the open market at from 10s to L1 a ton less than the prevailing price for the Colonial Sugar Refinery's products. They do not appear to reach South Australia, Western Australia or Tasmania, but are bought in the other States, the principal markets being found in Melbourne and in the cities of New Zealand.

## "KILLING FROSTS."

The total output, if things were ordered as the proprietors desire, should be from 6000 to 7000 tons, but last year it was only 2000, and this year the estimate is no more than 3000. So great a difference between expectation and reality naturally suggests inquiry, and the answer is given in one word, "Frosts." Last year, and this year up to March, they did great damage to the growing crops, and it is at Bundaberg that one realises the particular advantage of growing sugar-cane in the tropical country beyond the frost belt, which, as I said in a former article, means not further south than Mackay. The average rainfall at Bundaberg is only 35 inches a year, and the value of irrigation is perfectly recognised by all engaged in the sugar industry. The original clearing on the delta of the River Burnett was not very expensive, but the scrub country in some places has cost as much as L7, and even L10, an acre to clear and plant. The plant cane is cut at about eighteen months from the time of putting in the crop, and it is customary, I am told, to cut two or three ratoon crops before the plough is used. Steam-ploughing machinery is used on the larger planta-



tions, and it is customary to put in green manuring crops and allow a year to elapse before replanting with cane. This, at least, where the land is worked with care and due regard to the need of recuperation.

#### THE LABOR EMPLOYED.

On Fairymead there are said to be 120 Europeans engaged the year round, and the number is raised to 200 during the crushing season. Wages at the mill run from L1 to L3 a week, with rations.

No fewer than 450 Kanakas are employed on the Fairymead plantation, including only twelve women. Mr Young estimates that the Kanaka costs not less than 15s a week, which, as my readers will have observed, is precisely the same as the estimate further north. All the farmers who grow for Fairymead employ Kanakas, I am told, and I met a few planters in Bundaberg who answered for themselves in very emphatic terms. If the "white Australia" policy depended upon the consent of some of these men, Mr Barton would have to resign office forthwith. Mr Young told me that there is a good deal of sickness—lung diseases principally—amongst the newly-arrived Kanakas, but that when they become acclimatised they stand the climate fairly well.

#### NO TRASHING.

Mr Young is convinced that Kanaka labor is essential to the continuance of the sugar-growing industry roundabout Bundaberg "until," as he put it, "some reliable substitute is provided." This, notwithstanding the fact that neither he nor the majority of the farmers who grow for his firm's mill do any trashing. I have several times expressed the opinion that trashing was the only work about which there need be doubts, that any other work in a sugar field could and would be done by whites if they got a chance and a reasonable wage. Now, at Bundaberg there are two schools of thought on what I regard as the main question. Some think that trashing is necessary. Others, including Mr Young, hold, with what seems to me to be a good deal of solid judgment, that, in a district liable to such severe and ruinous visitations of frost, to trash the cane is to deprive it of its natural protection. It is on this ground that they forbear. They argue

that the advantages to be gained do not by any means counterbalance disadvantages not only possible, but highly probable, as the last two seasons have disastrously demonstrated.

"As you do not trash your cane, do you tell me, Mr Young, that white men could not do your work?"

"It is not that they can't do it. They won't do it. That is to say, we have no assurance that any sufficient number of white men will be available at the time we want them, and at rates which the industry at present prices can pay."

"You would rather keep Kanakas all the year round?"

"Yes. I regard them as necessary for weeding and the general work of cultivation, apart from trashing."

It seemed from further conversation on the point that the estimate for white labor is 36s a week, with rations. Allow that the latter cost 8s a week, which is the allowance made in the North where wages are paid to married men in lieu of rations, and the figure is 44s a week, nearly three times the cost of the Kanaka. But it is not pretended that if white men were available that half as many of them would be required all the year round. Eliminate trashing from the operations and the conditions of field work would nearer approximate to those of farming in other parts of Australia, this is to say, there would be busy periods and slack periods of the year. And beyond all doubt the white man can do more work than the Kanaka. As a matter of fact, a party of Italians, who cultivate about 100 acres close to Bundaberg, do the whole of their own work, and get 10s a ton for their cane, which is the same price paid to farmers employing Kanakas.

#### THE PROTECTION NECESSARY.

Under the circumstances, I am anxious to hear from Mr Young what degree of tariff protection would afford a set-off to the abolition of Kanaka labor. He did not hesitate to name the sum, to express the opinion that if the Kanaka is to go the sugar-grower should have protection to the extent of L6 a ton. In other words, the duty upon sugar brought from abroad should, in his opinion, exceed the excise by L6 a ton. There is a general idea that the excise will be L3, therefore the claim is for an import duty of L9. Suppose that to be absolutely operative



in the price of sugar to the consumer, and it is under a half-penny per pound. Are the people of the Commonwealth prepared to pay that as the price of maintaining a White Australia, or is the sentiment we hear so much of utterly without what I may venture to call pocket-depth? We shall soon see.

#### BINGERA PROPERTY.

Ten miles west of Bundaberg is the Bingera Plantation, the property of Messrs Gibson and Howes. I am sorry that time does not permit of my visiting this great plantation, where the enterprising management have established a magnificent object lesson in the art and value of irrigation. No less a sum than L30,000 has been expended in a pumping plant which raises ten million gallons of water in twenty-four hours, and in provision for distributing, which irrigates 15,000 acres once every week. There are nearly 1400 acres under cane at Bingera proper, and as much again in the adjoining properties, the Cedars and Hill End, belonging to the same firm. The Bingera mill is thoroughly up-to-date, and it crushes the cane of some 80 farmers in addition to that of the owners. Mr Gibson is an honored member of the Queensland Legislative Council, and a man held in high estimation by all who know him. Black labor suits him as well as his neighbors, but he is one of the few men of his class who view the future with equanimity, and he declines to admit that sugar-growing is wholly dependent upon the Kanaka. When I met him at Bundaberg he handed me a statement, prepared from the plantation books, for the season 1898-99, with a view of showing the industrial value of the industry. I cannot do better than give the statement in the form I received it. Here it is:—

#### BINGERA STATISTICS.

Labor employed to crop 90,000 tons of cane, convey it to factory and convert into sugar (exclusive of Government employes):—

Whites, married ..	117
Sons, etc., of farmers ..	100 (members of family)
Single men ..	345
—	562 total of whites
Blacks ..	427
—	
Grand total ..	987 whites and blacks

Population dependent almost entirely on the above sugar crop:—

Heads of households..	117
Wives ..	107
Children ..	396
Single men ..	345
—	965 whites
add	427 blacks

Grand total. 1392

Also employed on sugar cane hauling and field work only:—

321 Horses  
with 130 Drays, &c.

Cane purchased from 82 farmers, 42,000 tons; the mill owners grew the rest.

Besides cane growing these 82 farmers had the privilege of supplying the factory owners' requirements as follow:—

4000 cords firewood,  
1600 bags sweet potatoes,  
1000 bags of maize,  
Sleepers for railway lines, etc., etc.

For carriage alone 33 miles of private (portable and permanent) lines were provided, and the tonnage over these lines by four locomotives and horse teams was 107,000 tons, and the mileage 20,000 miles.

The Government railways received L7000 for the carriage of 30,000 tons of sugar cane and approx. 16,000 tons of general goods, made up of sugar, bagging, 2670 tons firewood, 1500 tons manure, 1500 bags of lime, 300 tons coal, 300 tons water, 100 tons flour, machinery, etc. A considerable revenue was also obtained from a heavy passenger traffic.

Shipping.—Coastal shipping benefited to the extent of L5000 for freights.

Harbor Boards for wharfage and dues, from L1500 to L2000.

Marine Insurance Companies, for marine insurance, L200.

The following are a few of many who benefit by the industry:—

Bag Merchants—200,000 bags (made in Queensland), and 25,000 sacks.

Lime Burners—300 tons of lime.

Collieries—300 tons of coal.

Timber-getters, etc.—4000 cords of firewood, sleepers, etc.

Flour Mills—100 tons flour.

Graziers—600 head bullocks, and horses besides.

Sawmills—Timber for factory buildings and general repairs.

Brickmakers—Bricks.

Foundries—Castings and machinery, repairs, etc.

Chemical Works—Chemicals.

Saddlers—Saddlery and repairs.

Blacksmiths—Shoeing, implements, repairs.

Wheelwrights—Drays, waggons, etc.

Tilemakers—Tiles for draining fields.

Sanitary Companies and Others—Manures for fields.

Besides hardware and other merchants, agents, printers, tradesmen of all kinds (carpenters, bricklayers, etc., etc.)



Needless to say that Mr Gibson is a hard-headed Scot. It will be observed that the hon. gentleman does not miss anything. Even the printer is remembered — I have known folks who forget him — and any tradesman who might otherwise think himself slighted by the Laird of Bingera may be comforted in the reflection that he is no doubt one of those two etceteras.

## CHAPTER XX.

### VIEWS OF A PLANTER.

Before proceeding to summarise the conclusions to which I have been drawn by my short and admittedly hasty survey of the conditions under which sugar is grown in Queensland. I think it right to submit here to the judgment of "Herald" readers, the testimony of a very experienced sugar-grower of the Cairns district. For it I am indebted to the courtesy of Senator Stewart, who has been good enough to express his sense of the fairness with which in these articles, I have endeavored to set out fully and frankly all that I have been able to gather in opinions, both in favor of and against the employment of Kanaka labor. The planter's remarks have reference only to land under the plough, and he holds strong views as to the need of suitably preparing the soil by first planting it with cowpea or beans, to be ploughed in for manure. "Sugar cane," he says, "may be planted in the tropical parts of Queensland, at any time, from the end of April to the end of September. Of course, the sooner it is planted the better, but as very little can be done with most soils during the wet season, it is very seldom a start can be made with planting before the 1st of May."

### PLANTING CANE.

When dealing with the Johnstone River district I described the operation of planting as I saw it then performed by Kanaka men and women. The Cairns man gives another picture of planting. He says:—"A good team of horses is required to open the drills, which require to be from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet to 6 feet apart, and as deep as possible. It will require two men to drop the plants after the plough. This is done by the men picking up an armful of plants, say 20 or 30, and walking

along the furrow, dropping the plants one foot apart, and putting his foot on each plant as dropped. By so doing, the plant is pressed into the loose soil at the bottom of the drill. Two men will be required to cut the plants and deliver them in convenient heaps for the droppers. I find the best plan to cover the plants is to run a harrow along the drills after the droppers. Two horses must be used, one walking on each side of the drill. The man opening the drills can also do the work. It will take an hour before dinner to cover the morning's work, and an hour in the evening for the remainder. The cost of planting in this way will be about 20s an acre, all white labor. It will be less if boys from 15 to 18 years of age are procurable, and they can do most of the work as well as grown persons." My readers may recollect that in referring to planting as done in the Colonial Sugar Company's property near Geraldton, I said it was work for mere children, therefore the testimony of the experienced Cairns grower tallies perfectly with the view which, as a casual observer, I ventured to put.

### THE CULTIVATION.

In regard to the cultivation of the cane my witness describes the work in the following terms:—"After the land is planted a couple of weeks, a light harrow can be run over the ground, so as to destroy any young weeds that may be making their appearance. When the plants are well up care should be taken by keeping the cultivator going, that no weeds get a start. Every farm should have a disc cultivator as well as a Planet Junior. With the Planet Junior you can go within two or three inches of the plants, so that there will be very little hoe work to be done. However, no weeds must be allowed to make a start; and a man must go with a hoe along the rows twice while the plants are growing, but as he will be able to do at least half an acre each time, the expenses will not be heavy, and it is light work that any boy can do. However, if the work should be neglected and the weeds or grass get a start, as I have often seen them do then they become very troublesome and expensive. But when this happens to a man once he generally takes care it does not happen again. About Christmas time the cane should be so far advanced that it will be able to look after itself. After the first few



heavy showers it will grow so fast that in a few weeks all the ground is shaded when it will not require any more to be done to it. Thus far I am positive that white men can do, and are in many cases doing, all the work that is required."

#### TRASHING THE CANE.

It is when we come to trashing that we reach the really debatable ground. Let the planter speak on this subject, because he puts one or two new and interesting points:—"Trashing is work which is being continually pointed to as not being fit for white labor; but as a matter of fact it is work which in nine cases out of ten need not be done at all; and even if it had to be done it is best done in the cool weather. Again when trashing is carried out it is invariably performed after the wet season, when the weather is cool. On some plantations where there is plenty of black labor it is generally very hard to find work for the boys during the rainy season, so they are put trashing cane if there is any fit to trash. In reading the report of the two Royal Commissions on the sugar industry, 1885, I find that many managers state that trashing cane is of little, if any, benefit. I have heard Mr McCulloch, a Government inspector of Central Mills, say that trashing is unnecessary. I have asked one of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co.'s managers if trashing was of any benefit. His answer was that in a dry climate like that of Cairns he considered it of no advantage; and we know that Cairns, next to Geraldton, has the wettest climate in Queensland. Further, I have been through the Mackay district on two occasions at crushing time, and I did not see any cane that was trashed. However, if trashing were necessary the proper months to do it are April, May and June, when we have cool weather and white men can do it as well as black. I have seen little girls trashing cane and it did not hurt them."

#### CUTTING AND LOADING.

How far machinery will in future facilitate cutting cane is only a matter of the purest speculation. At Cairns and a few other places, I was told that white men could not do this work. Dr Maxwell, the sugar expert, in his report to the Federal Government, testifies to the truth of my statements, that it is regu-

larly done by white men in the Tweed and Richmond rivers. On this point the Cairns grower says:—"I estimate that about half the cane grown in the Cairns district is cut and loaded by Kanakas; the other half by Chinese and Hindoos. The Chinese and Hindoos usually cut by contract. Last season 1900-1, the contract price was 2s 10d per ton. A few years ago some farmers in the district called for tenders for the cutting and loading of their cane, offering to give white men the preference. A couple of white men took the contract at 3s a ton, and then employed others at so much per week. In that way the farmers had their cane cut by white men. However, the wages men were not very pleased with the contractors preferring to work by contract for themselves. Again, a neighbor of mine let the cutting of his cane to a party of white men. The gang being a small one, asked me if I were agreeable to let my Kanaka boys cut with them, and when my neighbor's job was finished, they would come and help to cut mine, allowing one boy as equivalent to one white man. I agreed to this, and the whiteman and boys worked together, and satisfactorily cut and loaded my neighbor's cane. They were starting with my boys to cut my crop, but the mill then refused to give me any trucks, though the tram line was running through my paddock. Through the white men not being able to get any more cane to cut, the party had to break up, and there has been no cane cut by white men in the Cairns district since then. However, no man can truthfully say that white men cannot do the work, but it is hardly fair to bring the white man down to the level of Chinamen and Hindoos. Whites must be paid a reasonable rate, a rate that will bring them to the work, and they must receive a guarantee, such as is given to the Chinamen and Hindoos that they will get the season's work."

#### INTERESTING FIGURES.

Some figures dealing with the cost of clearing land, and producing sugar by the employment of Kanakas, have appeared in these articles, but I had not ventured to calculate what the cost would be if the work were wholly confined to white men. The Cairns grower has done this. His figures present an interesting study:—



Cost of cultivating, say, 25 acres of plant cane and 25 acres ratoons:—

#### PLANT CANE.

To cost of two ploughings, harrowing and rolling, at £1 10s per acre	£37 10 0
Planting, at £1 an acre	25 0 0
Cultivating and weeding, at £2 10s per acre	62 10 0

#### RATOON CANE.

Rattooning 25 acres, at £1 an acre	25 0 0
Total cost of 50 acres	£150 0 0

#### RETURNS.

From 25 acres of plant cane, 20 tons per acre, at, say, 9s per ton	£225 0 0
From 25 acres ratoons, 16 tons per acre	£180 0 0
Gross returns	£405 0 0
Less cost of production	150 0 0
	£255 0 0
Deduct for wear and tear and contingencies, 10 per cent.	25 10 0
Net profit from 50 acres	£229 10 0

#### FURTHER EXPLANATION.

On this the planter remarks:—"In taking 20 tons as an average per acre for plant cane, and 16 tons for ratoon, I think I have adopted a fair figure for Queensland. I know places which produce nearly double that, but then there are other places where the land is so impoverished by bad farming and continuous cropping, that much less is produced, especially in a dry season. But land that will give only 7 or 8 tons to the acre is not cane land. I have fixed 9s as the price of cane per ton, plus cost of cutting, loading and hauling to main train, which generally amounts to 3s per ton more. Some mills give a little less, some more. Of course, when Kanakas are employed to help plant the cane, and to do hoe work, the cost of production is less, thus:—

Saving of 5s per acre in planting 25 acres plant cane	£6 5 0
Saving of 10s per acre in weeding 25 acres	12 10 0

Total saving by employing Kanaka labor	£18 15 0
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In the case of the ratoons the ploughman performs the whole of the labor, and there is no need of Kanakas, so that the cost of production of 50 acres of cane where all white labor is employed is £150; where Kanakas are employed to do some of the work (all they can profitably do), £131 5s; shewing a difference of £18 15s,

which, reduced to a single ton of cane, makes the cost of production by all white labor, 3s 4d per ton, with part Kanaka labor, 2s 11d per ton, so that five pence per ton is all that the farmer gains by employing Kanaka labor in the cultivation of his cane."

#### COST OF CUTTING, &c.

The whole story is not told, however, until the cost of cutting and loading by exclusively white labor is stated. On the Tweed and Richmond Rivers the gangs appear to work well at a rate which gives each man about 7s a day. The Cairns planter considers that they would want more in Northern Queensland, and he tackles the problem fairly and squarely, thus:—"As a rule, though the practice varies, the farmer hires the labor, especially for the job, and it is a matter of importance to him to make sure of getting the required amount of labor at the proper time. The work is in many cases done by contract. The present contract price in the Cairns district is from 2s 6d to 3s per ton, the work being done by Chinese and Hindoos. The average amount which can be cut and loaded is about 10 tons per week per man, throughout the season, which means a wage of from 25s to 30s per week. The work is worth, for a white man, 10s a day, equal to 6s per ton, and nothing less will induce white men to do the work consistently and reliably. Their ability to do the work is unquestionable. As I have said, I have myself seen a gang of ten white men at the work, and it was just as well done as if done by colored labor. Besides, white men have cut cane in every district of Queensland, as a fact. They do not do it always, for the simple reason that it will not pay them to work at Kanaka's wages." A conclusion that will hardly come to the southern mind as a stunning surprise.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

#### QUESTION OF ABILITY.—CAN WHITES DO THE WORK?

The time has now arrived for setting forth the conclusions to which I have been drawn as the result of my inquiries, observation, research and thought upon the Queensland sugar problem. The main



question naturally divides itself into three principal phases as follow:—

1. The Ability Phase.
2. The Economic Phase.
3. The Moral Phase.

If any critic say that the moral phase is entitled to first place, he will perfectly express my own views; but I have put the phases in order of convenience rather than in order of merit, and without delaying the reader with further explanation, let me proceed at once to consider: Can white labor do the work of the Queensland sugar fields?

#### SUB-TROPICAL QUEENSLAND.

So that the the ground may be cleared for those who, without prejudice or partiality, would wish to know upon what facts they are to base their judgment as responsible citizens in the Commonwealth, I shall first state what I hold to be the unarguable situation at Bundaberg and in sub-tropical Queensland generally. It is simply that in every essential department of sugar-growing white men can do the work. The hon. Mr Gibson, M.L.C., laird of Bingera, and the most experienced sugar grower in the district, much as he would like to see the Kanaka retained for the benefit of his neighbors and himself, is far too honest a man to deny that the work can be done by whites. Dr. Maxwell, in his report to the Commonwealth Government alludes to Southern Queensland as the place where white labor is more and black labor less efficient. Even that astonishing Kanakaphile, Mr Teece—who writes, as an authority, and yet makes the surprising statement that the Kanaka is not “becoming part of our people”—unconsciously gives away the Bundaberg case to his bete noir, the Labor Party, for does he not chide Mr Barton because the hon. gentleman did not pursue his investigation beyond Bundaberg. “He might,” says the terrible Teece, “as well have gone to Bourke to obtain an experience of the temperature of the Arctic regions.” If this mean anything, it can only be that Bundaberg is quite out of the question. That is precisely where I put it. It seems mere waste of time and space to argue about it. From clearing the land to loading up the newly cut cane on to the mill trucks, there is nothing essential to sugar growing in Southern Queensland or in New South Wales that white men cannot do, nor have I discovered any experienced person who says that there is.

#### IN THE TROPICS.

Turn we now from that part of Australia concerning which there is no substantial difference of opinion as to the ability of a white man to do the work, and look to the north. Here we get into territory in which there is not only argument, but cause of argument. We are in the tropics, and we are considering only the strip of coast land particularly suitable for sugar growing. The conditions of earth and atmosphere which favor the sugar-cane in this part of Queensland are certainly not those which make for robust health in men, still less are they those in which the women and children of our race can thrive. I have been told that what in a fine, large, general way is called the “opening out of the country” will effect a vast climatic improvement, and this may well be the case. Miasmatic conditions yield to improvements upon nature that man can make, and perhaps the summer of Northern Queensland twenty years hence may be much less trying than it is; but it is my business to deal just now with the facts of the present. Can white men do the work of the sugar field in tropical Queensland? Now, when you recollect that tropical Queensland means anywhere from Lat. 20. S. to 10. S., you will perceive that there is a positive, comparative, and superlative involved. Positive, shall we say, Mackay (Lat. 21. S.), and, although tropical, actually within the frost belt, as the cane-growers know to their loss; comparative, shall we say, Herbert River country (Lat. 18 S.), and the Johnstone River district (Lat. 17. S.); superlative, shall we say, Cairns (Lat. 16.54 S.), and all north of it. The climate is not equally hot and trying in all of these places. Yet, although I have suggested a rough and ready, albeit meteorologically sound, classification for those who would penetrate deep into the heart of the whole matter, I propose to assume, as a matter of convenience, rather than a matter of strict fact, that working in one part of tropical Queensland is not very much different from working in another part, and on this basis state my conclusions on the question: Can the white man do the work?

#### THE WORK IN DETAIL.

It is at the outset necessary to remember what the work is. In Chapter VII. I described it in detail. I would now invite students of the subject to re-read that description



and then apply the evidence it has been my privilege to submit in respect to each department of sugar-field labor. They may then determine whether my verdict is in accord with that evidence or despite it. It is necessary to deal with the departments of labor seriatim, and in their proper order, and I shall proceed at once to do so.

1. Clearing. This means cutting down the thick scrub on the land intended for sugar cane. Chinese and Kanakas are frequently employed at this work, but white men have done a considerable part of that already accomplished, and white men are doing more of it. I am of opinion that the "forest devil," and such appliances might be more generally employed for a good deal of this work. Forest-clearing is always hard graft. In the winter of the tropics it is as agreeable as laborious work can ever be—for nobody pretends that some of the world's necessary tasks, such, for instance, as hewing coal, are under the very best conditions, delightful. In the hotter months clearing would be very trying, but even then it may be doubted whether it is as hard as "humping" baskets of coal from a discharging ship at one of our wharves, with the mercury standing at 100 degrees in the shade. As a fact, clearing is not done in the summer months, the period when all hands are needed cutting, handling and crushing the cane, and shipping the product off to market. White men can do all the clearing.

2. Heaping the rubbish. The scrub is cut and burned, and the next operation is to gather the rubbish in heaps. Not only can white men do this work, but any white men. Even the broken-down clerk or the draper's assistant who has allowed his beard to become grey is physically capable of heaping rubbish after a burning off.

3. Holing. In the light, soft soil lines of holes from twelve to eighteen inches deep are made with a hoe. Here again the labor would be child's play for the powerful arms that did the clearing. Essentially light labor is holing, and practically any white man can do it.

4. Planting. Sugar cane cut into lengths from nine to fourteen inches long is brought into the field, and as the cart containing it moves along the line of holes, a lad throws out the "sets" as they are called. These, in the case of first planting are placed in the holes; in the case of subsequent plantings laid end for end in the plough furrows. Work

this that Kanaka women do. It can hardly afford enough exercise to keep a powerful man in appetite.

5. Weeding: For several months after the cane has been planted, it has to fight against a rank vegetation, which would overcome and destroy it, but which, when once the cane gets a firm hold, is vanquished, not only for that year, but also for every succeeding year—and there may be six, eight or ten—that ratoon crops are cut from the same roots. I have given prominence to the view of a Cairns grower, that if after planting the cultivator is kept going, and care exercised, the need for hand-weeding would be obviated. Now, if this be true that settles the matter. It is no more pretended that only Kanakas can use harrow and cultivator than it is pretended that Kanakas are needed in ploughing, an operation wholly performed by white men in the cane fields, and to engage in which Kanakas are forbidden by the existing Queensland law. If the weeds are allowed to get a start, and hand weeding is necessary, uncomfortable work has to be performed. It may have to be prosecuted in sloppy ground, where the barefooted Kanaka would be more suitable than the booted European. It is not the kind of work that the latter would prefer, but it is in no sense hard labor, and I should be sorry for the white man who admitted that, at a push, he couldn't do it. Hand-weeding in a cane field may mean no more than three months' work in five or six years, and if the Cairns planter is right, it should not even mean that. But if it should, a white man can do it.

6. Trashing. This I have repeatedly said is the operation in the cane field in connection with which it is questionable whether white men can do the work now regularly performed by Kanakas. For argument's sake, let us admit the necessity for trashing. Can white men do it? How difficult a question to answer this is may be best explained by saying that neither an unconditional affirmative nor an unconditional negative furnishes the reply. White men have trashed sugar cane in tropical Queensland, and "what man has done man can do." Therefore, it would not be dealing in truth to merely utter a general negative and invite people to consider the question answered. On the other hand, the conditions under which trashing is done in



Northern Queensland are such that I do not hesitate to say that it is not fit work for white men. This comes so perilously close to saying that white men cannot do it that one might almost as well go the whole length of the full declaration. The physical exertion of plucking away the dead leaves clinging to the cane, or even of clearing the trash from the roots, is not greater than, perhaps not as great as, that involved in weeding. But to spend hour after hour in the awful atmosphere of a dense cane jungle, even if no movement whatever was required, is exceptionally trying to the strongest man. While some whites appear to be able to do it, I have formed the opinion that white men generally are unable day after day and week after week to carry on this work. The exceptions only make the rule more obvious. "I have seen little girls trashing, and it did not seem to hurt them," says the Cairns planter, whose views I have given, and I am satisfied that he is a witness of truth. The Polynesian "Marys" do their share for, I repeat, the work is not in itself laborious. But conditions vary even in the same district. The weather at the time, the lightness or density of the crop, the character of the ground (whether fairly dry or wet, and the degree of wetness), and the adaptability of the persons who engage in the labor under the set of conditions existent—all these factors govern the answer to the main question. It is not every white man who can do stoke-hole work in the Red Sea, but some men do it; not a few, I believe, die at it. Whether trashing is as bad or worse is a matter of opinion. I have seen, even tried, both, and would prefer trashing. I can readily understand that another man would prefer stoking. Chacun a son gout! If it be proper to use the word "cannot" in respect to that which at best some white men can do, and which is only accomplished by whites at a physical cost beyond what I, as a lover of my species, and particularly of my own race, ought to pay in order to earn a living, then I say that white men cannot trash cane.

7. Cutting. It was only at Cairns that any very serious attempt was made to persuade me that this work could not be done by whites. Any sufficiently strong white man able to work at all in a hot, humid climate like that of North Queensland can learn to cut cane, and do the work quite as well as he can learn and do the duty of a navvy or wharf laborer.

## ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS.

On the simple score of ability then, considered apart from everything else, I am, as will be seen, drawn to the conclusion that white men can do the work of clearing heaping, holeing, planting and cutting. I am less positive, it will be observed, in respect to weeding, if that operation is to be done by hand, and I virtually declare against white labor for trashing cane. That is the situation as I see it—rightly or wrongly, but in either case with honest eyes. If I am right, the retention of the Kanakas as, economical considerations apart, a necessary factor in the preservation of the sugar industry of North Queensland depends upon the assumed need of having men to weed and to trash. Is this need real? In so far as weeding is concerned it does not look much like it. If the whole army of Kanakas were shipped back to their native islands to-morrow, the sugar planter would quickly mend his methods, and, I think, even more effectively than at present get rid of the weeds which menace young cane.

## THE TRASHING QUESTION.

Trashing is quite a different matter. So necessary does the Colonial Sugar Refining Company regard it that, as I have shown, they insist upon their tenant farmers supplying trashed cane. That may mean a great deal or it may only mean little. It may indicate a belief that sugar cane cannot be successfully grown unless the growing crop be trashed; it may mean no more than that trashing is desirable, that while there are Kanakas available to do it the company sees the expediency of insisting upon its being done, but that its abandonment would simply be an incidental disadvantage—which is a somewhat different thing from ruin. There is undoubtedly a considerable volume of experienced opinion in favor of the view that trashing is not an essential. It is questioned whether the additional strength which the growing cane gets is an essential set-off to what trashing costs now. That question would quickly achieve a greater prominence if the comparison were between the added advantage and the cost of white labor. Dr. Maxwell, in his report to the Commonwealth Government, speaks of neglected trashing, "although imperatively necessary in many



## CHAPTER XXII.

districts, and most so in those conditions of climate where the white laborer is least able to perform it." Apparently then it is not "imperatively necessary" in all districts. Nor is it clear in those districts where the necessity is held to exist, either (1) that the conditions which create the necessity, or (2) that the neglect of this particular operation is ruinous. Trashing is omitted, the expert tells us, "at a great cost in the quality of the cane juice," but precisely what that may mean, say, in hard cash, is not stated. From one of the most experienced men I met in the north, I got a very strong expression of opinion that trashing is not necessary, that the gain in the value of the cane is not an adequate ration for the cost of labor. He added, however, that if with the grower the question was one of finding something for the Kanakas to do while the cane was ripening it suited very well to put them on trashing. As a general thing, he does not think it necessary to do more than trash—as is sometimes done—a couple of rows of cane all round a sugar field, as a measure of security against a grass fire. Of course, it would not do to send to the mill cane laden with trash, and the rule where the operation is dispensed with in respect to the growing crop is to do the trashing as the cane is cut, loading only clean cane on to the mill trucks. The view that trashing is not absolutely necessary is by no means exceptional, and if it be sound, we arrive at a settlement of the most important phase of what I may call the white capacity question. Deny the essentialness of trashing, in fact, and you virtually deny the essentialness of the Kanaka. My own conclusion is, under all the circumstances, that neither hand-weeding nor trashing is necessary for the preservation of the Queensland sugar industry, and that, therefore, in every essential part of that industry the work can be done by white men. So much on the score of mere ability. Whether the industry would pay on a purely white labor basis is another matter, and in my next chapter I shall endeavor to put my conclusions respecting it.

### THE ECONOMIC PHASE. — CAN CANE-GROWING SUPPORT WHITE LABOR?

Will it pay the growers of sugar cane in North Queensland to continue operations if they are deprived of Kanaka labor? As a matter of fact the experience of the last few years has shown that with fewer Kanakas more sugar is being produced. There were 10,755 Poly-nesians in the country in 1885, and the production was only 55,796 tons. In 1898, with 8826 Kanakas, the production was 123,289 tons. But by 1898 the number of white cane-growers in Queensland had increased from the mere handful who ran the whole business in 1885 to 2610. White men can do the work, and the question now is one of wages.

#### DR. MAXWELL'S FIGURES.

Let us assume that Dr Maxwell, who has access to all the official papers, and whose particular business it is to study the sugar question, gives us, in his recent report to the Commonwealth Government, figures upon which we may absolutely rely. They do not differ very greatly, I observe, from those which I have collated and published in these articles. No advocate of Kanaka labor will refuse to accept the assumption that Dr Maxwell is quite reliable, and for the moment I am not considering the views on the other side. Now the outcome of a series of elaborate calculations on the doctor's part is to give the relative cost of white and Kanaka labor as follows:—

District.	Cost of Islander per Year.			Cost of Islander per Week.			Cost of Islander per Working Day.		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
Bundaberg	37	2	3½	0 14	3		0 2	4½	
Mackay . . .	32	0	10	0 12	4		0 2	0¾	
Cairns . . .	36	6	9	0 13	11½		0 2	4	
Means . . .	35	3	4	0 13	6		0 2	3	

The figures given in the above table relate only to the cost of South Sea Islanders during the term of indenture. When this term is expired the islanders make new arrangements, which may be with the same or some other employer. In all cases, however, it is at a higher rate of cost. After examination of the statements of cost of the free or "short term"



islanders, an average has been reached which is brought into comparison with the cost of the indented islander—

Class of South Sea Islander.	Cost per Year.	Cost per Week.	Cost per Working Day.
	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
Indented ..	35 3 4	0 13 6	0 2 3
Short Term	38 6 4	0 14 9	0 2 5½
Means ...	36 14 10	0 14 1½	0 2 4¼

#### RELATIVE COST OF "WHITE" and "SOUTH SEA ISLAND" LABOR.

It is now possible to furnish a comparative statement of the "cost" of White and Pacific Island labor, so far as the cost is determined by the factor of wage, or compensation. The comparison has to be limited to laborers in the cane fields, and cannot be extended to the mills, for the reason that the islander is excluded from such indoor occupations. It has, moreover, to be kept in view, when dwelling upon the factor and differences of wage, that the more skillful acts of labor in the field, and which bear a higher rate of compensation, are more generally reserved to the white laborer. The figures, therefore, have to be taken as a bald statement of what "White" and "Pacific Island" classes of labor are actually costing, or receiving as compensation, in the cane fields.

TABLE OF COST OF "WHITE" AND "SOUTH SEA ISLAND" LABOR.

Class of Labor.	Cost per Year.	Cost per Week.	Cost per Working Day.
	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
White Labor	80 7 10	1 10 11	0 5 2
South Sea Island Labor	36 14 10	0 14 1½	0 2 4¼

#### ASSUME THE WORST.

It will be observed that the cost of the white laborer, presumed to be permanently employed, is in round figures L80 a year, and that of the Kanaka L36 a year. Now let us begin by supposing a very extreme situation. We will assume that if all the Kanakas were banished from the Queensland sugar fields, (1) that as many whites would be required to fill their places, (2) that these whites, instead of getting intermittent employment, would be kept going all the year round, and (3) that the wage would be the same as that at present paid to white men. According to official figures supplied to me by the Queensland Government, the number of Kanakas now in the State is 9324. Reckon their pay at L36

a year and you get a total of L335,664. But if the places of the Polynesians were to be supplied by an equal number of white men, the rate of pay being L80 a year, the cost would be L745,920—a fine large group of figures. The difference between the two totals is also decidedly impressive—L410,256. This, then, in the extreme conditions I have assumed, would apparently be the cost of substituting white for Kanaka labor in the Queensland sugar fields. Before, however, the mind wholly surrenders itself to a sense of the enormity of these figures, it is desirable, nay, essential, to recollect some associated figures, and more particularly the market value of the product with which we are dealing. For reasons already explained in these articles, there is much fluctuation in the quantity of sugar which Queensland turns out. Here are the figures for the last four years:—

Year.	Acres crushed.	Volume of Sugar.	Yield per Acre.
1897 ..	65,432	57,916 tons	1.49 tons
1898 ..	82,391	163,734 tons	1.98 tons
1899 ..	79,435	123,289 tons	1.55 tons
1900 ..	72,651	92,554 tons	1.28 tons

The exact mean is 119,373 tons; but I propose, for convenience sake, to call it 120,000. In considering the "value" of this crop, quite a number of things have to be remembered, not the least important being, whether it ought to be declared at what the mill-owner pays for the cane, at what the plentifully gilded refiner pays for the raw sugar, or what the public pays for the refined sugar (including duties, ranging in the several States from L3 to L6 a ton). An official return gives the mean "value" of raw sugar during the four years, 1897-1900, at about L9, and that of the refined at about L16 a ton. The total would, therefore, be, for raw, L1,080,000, and for refined sugar, L1,920,000, and these magnificent figures should help to steady the mind should it show signs of failing, under the suggestion that, with a substitution of white labor for black, possibly L410,256 would be added to the cost of production. What would that mean per ton? Just a trifle less than L3 10s, for that much per ton on 120,000 tons would give L420,000. A huge sum, and awfully significant of what Australians would have to pay in order to preserve the whiteness of this continent.



### TAX ON THE CONSUMER.

Whether this extra charge would fall upon the consumer, or on some person intermediate, it is not my business here to discuss. Let us go on supposing the very worst, and say that the consumer would have to pay it. The nice little sum may then be stated thus:—If it be necessary to provide £420,000 a year more in order to pay for the labor of producing 120,000 tons of Queensland sugar, by how much per pound would the price of sugar be increased? Any third-class State school scholar would provide the answer. It is exactly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  farthings? So that the housewife, whose usual order to the grocer was 4lbs. of sugar, would have to pay precisely three ha'pence more for, say, her weekly supply. Some people I met in the north, and who want to keep their Kanakas, "dared" me to tell "the worst" to southern readers. Behold the economic worst! A tax of three ha'pence on each four-pound parcel of sugar. Does it not speak volumes for the grit of a British people, that we southerners are viewing the prospect with perfect equanimity?

### MOST LIKELY POSITION.

But would the worst happen? That is the question which now quite naturally suggests itself. If there be a man anywhere in Australia who really believes that the repatriation of the Kanaka would immediately double the cost of production to the Queensland planter, I should be glad to hear from him. Meanwhile my own view is that if the 9300 Kanakas in Queensland were sent home at the close of the present sugar season (i.e., the end of the year), the work of 1902 which they would otherwise do would be performed by something more than half the number of whites, and even that number would not get constant employment. The planter would engage men as he wanted them, just as the Victorian farmer does at harvest time. As the result of careful inquiries, I have formed the opinion that in the absence of Kanakas the planters would readjust their plans very materially. On the smaller holdings little or no hired white labor would be permanently employed during about eight months of the year. The farmer-planter usually does his own ploughing now, and he, with the members of his family, perhaps, would perform the greater part of all the work necessary up to the period that the crop was ready for cutting. One or two whites, at from £1 to £1 10s a week and rations,

might be employed throughout the year, where now, say, six Kanakas are kept going. On the larger holdings it would be much the same. All would want many hands for the cutting, just as graziers, who give very little permanent employment, want considerable numbers of men at shearing time. I do not think a great deal of trashing would be done while the cane was growing. The removal of the dead leaves would more generally than it is at present become an operation concurrent with the cutting of the ripened cane. Nor do I omit from consideration that, under new conditions, the whites employed in the cane fields would get more for their labor than they do at present. Their cost to the planter would hardly be less than £100 a year, that is to say, £20 a year more than it is now. I have formed the opinion that the situation on a plantation which at the present time employs 100 Kanakas, would be something like this:—

#### PRESENT POSITION.

100 Kanakas, at £36 a year . . . . .	£3600
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#### REVISED POSITION.

First half of year—	
25 whites, at £100 per annum . . . .	£1250
Second half of year—	
75 whites, at £100 . . . . .	3750

Total . . . . .	5000
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Additional cost of labor for year, £1400.

### A COMPROMISE ASSUMPTION.

The increase, I have shown, amounts to about 40 per cent. It may be, however, that I under-estimate the need of men during the first half of the year, and that more labor would be required than I am allowing for. We should be on the safe side, I think, if we called the increase 50 per cent. What then does that mean? First, that for six months of the year quite three-quarters of the present number of hands would be employed; secondly, that of these little more than one-third would be kept on for the whole year; thirdly, that the rate (£100 a year) would be £20 a year more per man than Dr Maxwell says the pay of white labor is at present. I have shown above that the cost of the 9324 Kanakas now employed at £36 a year is £335,664. That is the present cost of the labor to the planter. Under the revised conditions indicated, however, the work done by 100 Kanakas instead of costing £3600 would involve an outlay of £5400, or 50 per cent. more. Apply that percentage of increase



to the whole cost of the Kanakas and one gets L503,496, instead of L335,664, a difference against the planters of L167,832, as compared with the difference shown in my statement of the "worst" of L410,256. The reader may judge for himself, on the basis of the information which these articles have afforded, which of the two differences is the more likely to be correct. Recollect that one is on the basis of L80 a year for white labor, and the other—that to which I incline—assumes that the white worker gets L100 a year, that is to say about 30s a week, with rations worth about 8s a week. The difference between the totals, it will be seen, represents nearly a quarter of a million of money. Suppose, since we are necessarily dealing here in speculations, we so far surrender what I venture to regard as the probabilities, and so far concede the views of those who talk about the "worst" as to "split" the difference of the differences. That would give us nearly L290,000. That, in my judgment, is the very outside figure of the increased cost of production of the present annual output of Queensland sugar, if, instead of paying Kanakas L36 a year the planter had to pay white men at the rate of L100 a year. It works out rather less than L2 12s a ton, or, if the consumer had to pay it, about a farthing a pound. As a tariff advantage to that extent is one of the easy expedients at the hands of the Federal Parliament, I do not hesitate to say that, given the necessary adjustment, it will pay the planter to carry on sugar-growing with white labor.

#### DEGREE OF PROTECTION NECESSARY.

Now, whether as matters stand to-day, the grower gets all the profit to which he is entitled, or whether too large a share goes to the refiner, or to someone else standing between the grower of cane and the consumer of sugar, I need not here discuss. Let us suppose, what I by no means believe, that as things stand at present, the proportions of profit are perfectly just, that the grower gets all he is entitled to. If we require him to pay more for his labor, then he is entitled to get more for his cane. It takes about 10 tons of cane to produce a ton of sugar, therefore if the additional labor works out L2 12s per ton of sugar, the grower must get the full advantage of that in increased price of his cane at the mill to which he sells, or in the price

of raw sugar if he be one of the co-operators in a central mill, in order to preserve his present rate of profit. The practical Mr Young, of Fairymead, Bundaberg, says that the protection necessary to preserve the sugar industry, should the Kanaka be abolished, ought not to be less than L6 a ton, that is to say, the duty on sugar brought from abroad ought to exceed any excise by L6 per ton. It seems to me, on the basis of the figures quoted above, that a lesser amount of protection—always provided that the right people got it—would be sufficient under the new circumstances. The net imports of the five federated States outside Queensland, in 1899, amounted to 109,607 tons, and the Queensland exportation was only 54,586, just about one-half the requirements of the rest of the Commonwealth. I am of opinion that the great northern State will soon be producing all that Australia can consume, and up to that point the ease with which tariff protection may be afforded to the farmers as a set off to requiring them to dispense with Kanaka labor, need not be argued. It should be sufficiently obvious to the Federal Government.

#### CAIRNS PLANTER'S IDEA.

The Cairns planter, some of whose views I quoted in a previous article, has ideas on this head. He says :—White men can perform any work in connection with the production of sugar, in Queensland, and will perform it if they are paid white men's wages. At the present prices of raw sugar—L9 15s per ton—sugar growing is a profitable industry to the farmer who has a reasonable area of fairly good land, and it is also profitable to the manufacturer in a position to command an adequate supply of cane, to keep his mill fully employed. This is the case, notwithstanding that Queensland has to compete in the southern markets on equal terms with all other sugar-producing countries, including those which give a bounty on beet sugar. In so competing, Queensland, of course, has the advantage of colored labor, and there are some who say colored labor is indispensable, while others say it can be done without. I propose to give both sides their own way. Put an import duty of L4 a ton on all sugar coming into the Commonwealth, and collect an excise duty of L4 per ton from only those mills employing colored



labor, or producing sugar from cane grown by colored labor. A duty of 14 per ton on sugar means an advance of 9s per ton in the value of cane. That 9s will permit the farmer to pay 4s per ton more for cutting and loading, and unlimited reliable white labor will offer to cut and load at 6s 9d per ton. It will permit the manufacturer to pay the farmer 1s 6d per ton more for his cane, which means 13s 6d per ton more for his sugar. This leaves a margin of 2s per ton, showing that it may be practicable later on to reduce the import duty. This plan gives a bonus to the employer of white labor in the shape of import duty, as compared with the greater or less duty at present in the various States. The employer of colored labor is left, so far as labor is concerned, on precisely the same footing as at present. The result of adopting this plan will be that within two years it will be a chief concern of the planters how to get rid of their colored labor fast enough, and within five years there will be an end to colored labor in the sugar industry of Australia." A keen, practical mind is that of our Cairns planter, and there are much worse notions than his current amongst those who would solve the sugar problem.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE MORAL PHASE.

The moral phase of the Kanaka question is in itself a subject big enough for a series of articles, and I can only pretend here to touch upon a few of its features. I have said that the frequent stories of cruelty, ill-feeding, etc., are either wholly untrue or grossly exaggerated; but that does not alter the fact that the black traffic is only thinly disguised slavery. Part of the disguise is the elaborate Queensland system of laws in regard to it. These laws are so often and flagrantly violated—even Dr. Maxwell admits some transgressions—that one is constrained to take the view that the whole complicated system is only a blind. It is necessary to preserve appearances in the face of a censorious world, and these Queensland Acts and regulations are the paint and powder with which it is sought to give an aspect of beauty to an essentially ugly thing.

It is not only a traffic in living flesh and blood, but in human life. The death rate of Kanakas in Queensland, as I have shown in these articles, is not so high as it used to be, but it is still very high. It is estimated that up to the end of 1894 about 50,500 Kanakas had been imported into Queensland, and that of this number no fewer than 10,000—some say 11,000—had died. What awful tribute is this! Surely it may be said that the sugar-growing industry of Queensland has been baptised in the blood of the black man!

### HOW RECRUITING IS DONE.

The stories of what happens at recruiting are sufficiently appalling. The difference between the much regulated recruiting of to-day and the slave-hunting which marked the beginning of the traffic is considerable, but that "boys" are actually bought in the islands is apparently beyond doubt. The French are said to give a gun for every recruit. Our agents give a case of tobacco or hard cash. There is a tribal chief or a father or some one else to deal with, and every boy has his price.

How does it accord with national honor to carry on such a business as that represented by the trade in Kanakas under the glorious flag of our Empire? Let me quote that experienced Polynesian missionary, the Rev. William Gray, in answer:—"What I am concerned about is that we as a Christian nation should wipe out these races to enrich ourselves. Our credit as a Christian people and a nation is at stake. Sir Samuel Griffith says that this traffic can be carried on alongside of British honor. There are four mission societies carrying on work in the recruiting grounds of the Queensland Kanaka labor traffic, and the missionaries throughout almost to a man are agreed that the supply of Kanaka labor under the present regulations is not compatible with British honor and Christian sentiment. I am personally acquainted with the captains of the traffic, the Government agents, and the recruiters. I have seen the work before the days of the Hopeful case and since. It was thought that the traffic had been shorn of its flagrant abuses until the William Manson trial . . . shattered that belief. And in spite of this 'eye-opener' I willingly admit that a better class of men are now in the traffic; but the more I know of natives,



the more I know of 'good men' in the traffic, the more I know what the Kanaka labor traffic was and is, the more am I convinced that this traffic must be at heart what it always was and still is—a cruel, unjust, un-Christ-like demoralising traffic in human flesh."

The catching of Polynesian women is governed by a regulation which reads as follows:—"No woman is to be recruited without the consent of the chief of the island or of the village, or of the district from which she is brought." Here may we again draw upon Mr Gray's experience. "The married couples known to me who have recruited, with one exception, were elopements. . . . A wife or a single woman will arrange with another man or boy to recruit first chance. When taken into the boat, the man says that the woman is his 'Mary.' There is always a friend on hand to act the 'chief' and give his consent. There are no certificates of marriage or seals of royalty such as we have." I seem to understand from this that the missionary charges the traffic with aiding and abetting elopements in the islands where he and other great-hearted men have sought to establish the principles of Christianity.

#### KANAKAS AND THEIR "MARYS."

What does Mr Gray say on the inter-Polynesian sexual question involved? I had better quote his own words : — "Stories about the immorality of white men and black women are said to be greatly exaggerated, if not wholly false. As to the morality among themselves testimony varies a good deal. But on two points all parties are agreed. (1) Nearly all tribal fights, rows, and murders of Kanakas are in Queensland the result of disputes about women. (2) Another point on which there is agreement is that 'boys' sell their 'Marys' to one another. The price ranges from L5 to L10. My own impression is that apart from this buying and selling, the women are themselves fairly respectable. The immorality takes place in the Chinene dens, where immoral white women are provided by the Chinese shopkeepers. Some features of this part of the Kanaka's life abroad are more revolting than anything of island life that has come to my knowledge." The buying and selling of wives still goes on under the flag of England in Northern Queensland. I learned something about it in the Cairns district, where, my readers will recollect, trouble arises oc-

asionally because of a tendency on the part of the boys to "rush," as my planter informant plainly put it, the "Marys" in the field. By the way, Mr Gray has also a word to say in answer to those who plead the "benevolence" of the traffic, who point with pride to the fact that here and there a Kanaka is converted in Queensland and sent home a Christian. "Whatever," says Mr Gray, "may be the accidents of the traffic, the traffic itself cannot be credited with any benevolent intentions. The planters pooh-poohed the idea of converting the Kanaka at first, and although they now use this plea very few of them contribute to the work." Yet it is proper for me to say here that there are clergymen in the north who do a great work amongst these dark-skinned immigrants. One in the Herbert River district has devoted his life and his fortune to the teaching and uplifting of the Kanaka. But for the efforts of such men what the condition of Northern Queensland would be as the result of the Kanaka traffic one hardly likes to even imagine.

#### THE SERVILE POPULATION.

"Every year that passes deepens my conviction that a free self-governing population and a servile population not admitted to a share of the government cannot exist in the same country." In these words Sir Samuel Griffith, before the famous—or infamous—change of front which led to the repeal of the prohibition of 1885 expressed his view of the situation in Queensland. Nobody has seriously attempted to combat that view. Rather has the effect been to show that the Kanaka is a mere sojourner in Australia, and that therefore the criticism does not apply. Now it may be that some will regard the point raised by Sir Samuel Griffith as political rather than moral, and they are entitled to their opinion. For my part, I cannot but feel that a proper appreciation of what in an enlightened democracy ought to be the principles of public morality is impossible unless the strictest regard be paid to the relationship to each other of the units of society. The vaunted democracies of the ancient world were at best associations of men who held for themselves the rights of citizenship and kept other human beings in slavery. In the United States to-day descendants of Afghan negroes nominally enjoy the rights of citizenship, but the numerically eclipsed whites in some



States actually resort to physical force to prevent blacks going to the polls. In Queensland, apart from the considerable number of "ticket" boys, who are exempt from the Kanaka regulations, there are thousands of Polynesians "unaccounted for," and concerning whom the suspicion is that they have associated themselves permanently with the population. Visit any northern town, and more particularly observe the "walk-about Kanaka" at Bundaberg, and you will understand how some of the leakage displayed in official returns is explained.

#### THE "WALK-ABOUT" KANAKA.

"The sturdy, well-fed black man, the survival, who parades the streets of Bundaberg," remarks a writer in "Progress," "or who is hanging about on strike on the Isis, is a very different person from the ignorant, scared weakling who used to be landed with a metal ticket round his neck to distinguish him from his fellow. These seasoned 'islanders' are leasing land, marrying white females, entering into engagements not only in sugar growing, but other occupations, in fact, becoming a part of the population." There is not much doubt about it that a considerable number of Kanakas are achieving a permanent citizenship—and I have already expressed the opinion that unless a Kanaka is willing to return to his island home no existing law is strong enough to compel him. Politically, however, he remains servile, for he gets no vote. That is reserved for his piebald offspring.

The "Maryborough Chronicle," which I am told is not a "labor paper," publishes a report of the Currajong Farmers' Progress Association in May, 1899, in which one is given a picture of the "walk-about Kanaka," perfectly according with what I recently saw myself at Bundaberg. "The 'walk-about' Kanaka as a rule is a useless, impudent brute—a danger and a disgrace to Queensland. . . . We can thank the swaggering free Kanaka for most of our Chinese gambling hells, Japanese dens and many other infamies in this 'Christian' land." The writer goes on to say that the police were then "rounding up the camped Kanakas," and observed, "Their removal to anywhere also removes from here a danger to our women particularly." The Ayrshire "Chronicle" does not apparently think ill of the conditions on the Bur-

dekin where the Kanakas "can sport their horse and dog-cart, and a decent suit of clothes on Sundays when driving their 'Marys' and families out," and remarks that "amongst the hundred working in the district there is not one case where a white woman has lost respect for herself by living with them." There is an obvious ambiguity about that which "Progress," to which I am indebted for the extracts, only explains thus (!)

#### FEW WOMEN IMPORTED.

Readers of these articles will have been impressed by the fact that my inquiries amongst the planters invariably showed what a small number of Polynesian women are imported. "The proportion of women was always scandalously small," says a writer in "Progress," "but generally reached something approaching 10 per cent. With the destruction of the Liberal party who stood watch-dog over this shameful business, the traffickers appear to have considered that there was no further need for keeping up appearances." How just that criticism is let the following figures of Kanaka population at the end of each year named show:—

	Males.	Females.	Percentage of Females to Males.
'91 . . . . .	8,153	937	9.31
'92 . . . . .	7,514	769	9.20
'93 . . . . .	7,088	683	8.79
'94 . . . . .	7,830	651	7.68
'95 . . . . .	8,094	651	7.44
'96 . . . . .	8,003	600	6.97
'97 . . . . .	7,807	537	6.43
'98 . . . . .	8,099	490	5.70

I have no later figures, but am disposed to think that if they were available they would not make the situation look any better. On the contrary, I think they would show that the fall has been continuous. It would be a surprise to me to learn that the Polynesian women in Queensland to-day were in greater proportion than 5 to every 100 Polynesian men. Let the practical-minded reader consider what this must mean.

"The planters who introduced the traffic," said Mr Charles Parer in the notable speech I quoted in an earlier article, "would be horrified with this phase of the traffic if their class had to supply these (prostitutes) for their Kanaka employes. Is it such a little thing that the girls of the white workers—the children of the poor—are the victims of the dreadful sacrifice. It is to me a horrible



thought that one single child growing up in our State schools should be destined for such a fate; but then we rarely bring the black women from the islands with the men."

### INFAMOUS KANAKA "BUSINESS."

Recently I saw a reference to the Kanaka, in which he was described as "fairly moral." Now, whether he is moral or not in his relations with the women of his own race is a matter with which I do not for the moment concern myself. The matter of special importance to us is his relations with our women. It is that very concern which has time and again converted decent American citizens into bands of lynchers capable of taking the most fiendish revenge upon the negro who had dared to lift his eyes to a white woman. Does any sane man suppose that the hordes of full-blooded and unmarried savages brought from the South Sea Islands to work in the cane fields are leading lives of celibacy? I am told on reliable authority that there are at least twenty-three prostitutes at Bundaberg whose "business" is confined to Kanakas. Of these nine are Japanese, the remainder are European women. At Cairns the Japanese women in the "business" number thirty, and there are "some low white women," but I did not get the number. I have named the most important northern and the most important southern town of Kanaka districts, and the reader will probably conclude that the conditions in the centres of other black labor districts are not very different.

### MISCEGENATIONS.

But miscegenation does not depend wholly upon that phase of intercourse. "Progress" furnishes me with the following list of marriages of Kanakas to Australian and white women:—

1888.—2 to Queensland women, 2 to English women, and 1 to an Irish woman, total . . . . .	5
1889.—3 to Queensland women, 1 to a native of New South Wales, 2 to English women, 1 to an Irish woman, total . . . . .	7
1890.—3 to Queensland women, total . . . . .	3
1891.—2 to Queensland women, 2 to English women, total . . . . .	4
1892.—3 to Queensland women, 1 to native of New South Wales, 1 to an English woman, total . . . . .	5
1893.—2 to Queensland women, 2 to English women, total . . . . .	4
1894.—4 to Queensland women, 1 to English woman, total . . . . .	5

1895.—5 to Queensland women, 1 to native of New South Wales, 1 to an English woman, 1 to an Irish woman, 1 to a German woman, total . . . . .	9
1896.—11 to Queensland women, 1 to native of New South Wales, 2 to English women, total . . . . .	14
1897.—3 to Queensland women, 1 to native of New South Wales, 2 to English women, 1 to a Scotch woman, 1 to a German woman . . . . .	8

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One reads this, realises what is going on, and wonders whether morality is the better served when the Kanaka marries than when he remains unmarried. And when the talk is of the "mud and filth entering into the stream of a nation's pure life blood," one gets a fair idea of what is meant.

### CONCLUSIONS SUMMARISED.

In the foregoing articles I have sought to give fairly and with a reasonable fullness the facts incidental to the employment of Kanakas in the cane fields of Queensland. But I have not hesitated to put my own opinions strongly, and it is for the reader to determine whether or not they are justified by the facts. Here now finally is a summary of my conclusions on the three main phases of the Kanaka question:—

1. The ability phase. I am of opinion that white men can do all the essential work of sugar-growing, always providing that trashing is deemed a non-essential.

2. The economic phase. I am of opinion that it will pay to grow sugar with white labor, paid for at the rate of about £100 a year, provided that a tariff protection of about £4 a ton is accorded to the industry, and that the grower who has to pay for the labor gets the benefit of that protection. The reason I favor a Royal Commission of inquiry is not that I doubt the capacity of the white man or the capacity of the industry to pay him fair wages, but because there are a number of complicating factors, current agreements, etc., which must be the subject of careful consideration and adjustment if the Federal Government would avoid doing a great deal of incidental injustice. Moreover, on this phase I am presuming somewhat upon the idea that with the Kanaka out of the way the Labor departments of States many of whose citizens suffer from unemployment would be real, active and willing agencies for the northern planters.



3. The moral phase. In my own opinion the situation at Cairns supplies in itself, and apart from everything else, an unanswerable condemnation of the Kanaka traffic. It will be remembered that it was deemed necessary in the town mentioned to retain Japanese prostitutes for the use of the Kanakas, because it was considered that otherwise white women would not be safe. We are, therefore, led to the following reflections:—

(a) The Kanaka is brought into a highly civilised British country in order that he may help to bear the white man's burden.

(b) The Kanaka being a mere savage—(even though you occasionally find a hymn-book in his bunk)—becomes a menace to the white man's wife and daughters.

(c) Japanese prostitutes are provided with a profitable field.

(d) The white man's wife and daughters are virtually required by the said white man himself to live under the "protection" of the Japanese prostitutes.

(e) Daughters of civilisation, offspring of British fathers and mothers, the sweet school-girl of the years that have gone, afterwards, maybe, the beloved of some honest British man's heart, yields to the embrace of a filthy savage.

All this in a Christian State under the British flag. Surely it is at this point in the affairs of the Kanaka traffic that Young Queensland "made a gazing stock both by reproaches and affliction," may wring her hands in very shame, and, raising her contrite voice, exclaim with King Claudius, "Oh, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven!"







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